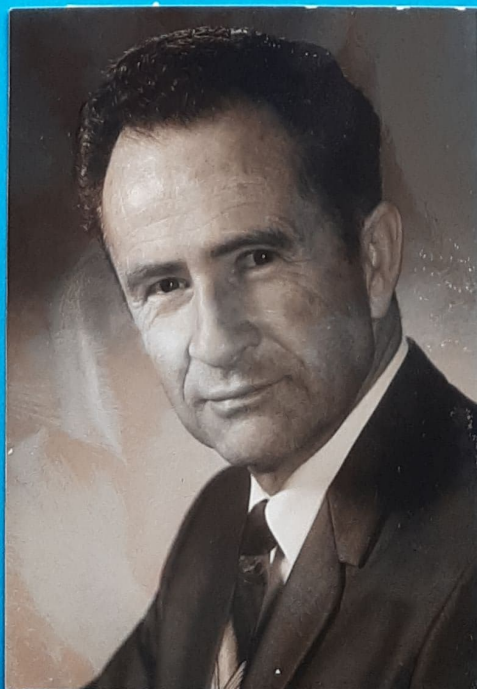


I Remember

the MEMOIRS of

*Robert W. Honline*





Please Note:

Anything written beyond this page (117) in these "Memoirs" was written by my precious wife Lenore.

I concluded my writing with Mother and I leaving "The Shack" for the last time in mid August of 1938 - \*

Lenore wanted it continued to conclude with Deanna's marriage in March of 1966 and so she proceeded with it without my knowledge - and did a superb job like she always did everything!

Bob  
September-2005

\* See page 109 in book No. 1 (First book)  
- Continue with page 117 (this book) OK?  
(Good luck!) - Needs work!



### A Concluding "Retrospect"

In retrospect again,  
I stand on top of "Memory Hill" and  
look back over a life of eighty-plus years, to date,  
some twenty years longer than it was my dear dad's  
privilege to live.

I stand amazed at the goodness of God  
in directing my life --  
even during the years before  
I had committed myself to Him.

I think back to those trying years after Dad died,  
those years when Mother and I went through great difficulties  
in trying to hold things together during  
the Great Depression.

Humanly speaking, we didn't have much going for us  
in the little house on its horizontal telephone-pole "foundation,"  
but God protected us, both physically and financially,  
during the devastating frosts of 1936,  
and the floods of 1938:  
we didn't lose a crop, and  
we were able to survive  
financially.

I know that it was through His leading that  
I met my wonderful Lenore  
during those years, and  
if nothing else good resulted from those early years,  
that made it all worthwhile.

And now, in looking back,  
I can make this rhetorical statement:  
Nothing good,  
nor of lasting benefit,  
ever came from my life  
apart from the hand of God;  
I praise and thank Him for it all.



PART SIX: DECISION TIME

1938 - 1940

Chapter ~~X~~ 30

Settling In

After almost four years in The Shack, the Victorian-style residence at 567 North Los Robles Avenue, in Pasadena, seemed like real "uptown living" to Mother and me. From the street the house appeared to be a single-family dwelling, as it had been originally built to be. After the Rineharts had acquired it, they had been able to incorporate it as a part of Rineway Court by extending the main driveway south from Parke Street into sort of an "L" toward the east, thereby making another entrance and exit from Los Robles Avenue -- just a short distance south of Parke Street. I really felt like we were "city dwellers," once again, because the rent included a garage for the car!

The front door of the house led from a porch that sat rather high from the level of the yard, and opened into a center hall that divided the large home into two smaller ones (duplexes). Our "half," on the south side of the hallway, consisted of a living room, bedroom, a large "walk-through" closet, dining room and kitchen. All of that -- after one main room, and the tiny kitchen and "bathroom" that we'd had in The Shack! Mother used the living room as a combination "front room" and bedroom: it was large enough to be a comfortable bedroom for her, and also allowed for arranging the sofa, rocking chairs, bookcases, side tables, and console radio, into an attractive sitting room.



I couldn't believe that I was going to have a bedroom all to myself! I really felt that it was a sacrifice on Mother's part to insist that I have the one and only bedroom; on the other hand, I couldn't help but wonder if she thought that would give her "first dibs" with the radio, and my guitar would at last be out of earshot for her. Oh, not really, of course, but it was going to be good for each of us to finally have some privacy, once again.

There was electricity, and we actually had a telephone! And I mustn't forget the bathroom! There was a bathtub -- the monstrous kind with the "claws 'n ball" feet, and a pedestal-type wash basin (with faucets and running water!). There was a toilet that flushed -- without pouring a bucket of water into it first; instead, there was an overhead water tank with a pull-chain. Old-fashioned, but it worked! Ah, luxury!

Mother was delighted with her kitchen -- it was small, but it was certainly much larger than the makeshift one she'd had to manage with at The Shack! There was a sink, and faucets that really produced running water! And she had a four-burner gas stove with an oven, and a refrigerator -- not an ice box, a refrigerator!

The laundry facility was in a utility room at the back of the house, and it was shared with the people who lived on the other side of the duplex. There was a washing machine, and a laundry tub; of course the "dryer" was the traditional clothesline setup, in the back yard. (This was long before the time of automatic dryers!) I was so glad she could once again enjoy those conveniences.

Mr. and Mrs. Wehrle (pronounced: Werley) lived in the duplex across the central hall from us. They were an elderly retired couple;



after she got acquainted with them, Mother enjoyed them very much. They were always friendly to me -- I appreciated that.

Where we were now living on Los Robles was too far to walk to the Immanuel Baptist Church up on Washington Boulevard, so Mother and I would drive there on Sunday mornings. However, our attendance wasn't regular for Mother did not always feel up to going --I believe her physical condition had deteriorated considerably due to the four difficult years at The Grove.

I did miss all of my friends at the Otterbein church more than I'd had any idea that I would. I really missed the Christian Endeavor meetings and the kids who were involved. At the Immanuel Church the youth program was very weak and little interest was shown in it by anyone. It was really obvious to me that my only interest in "church" had been because of the young people's activities, which had been such a major part at Bell Memorial, in Otterbein. I was not proud of my attitude, nevertheless it was a factor in my lack of desire to attend at Immanuel.

Then, too, after I got into the full swing of my college classes, and was working evenings until ten (and sometimes on Saturdays), I quite often needed Sundays for studying.

As time went on, Mother was renewing some of her old friendships, so when Mr. and Mrs. Nash offered to pick her up for church, she no longer had to depend on me for her transportation.

A lot of things were different for Mother and me, now that we were back in Pasadena and had begun to feel "settled in" in our rented "new home."



## Chapter ~~35~~ 31

### Crossroads and Decisions

The most important thing for me to do, just as soon as I could after returning to Pasadena, was to go to the Junior College admissions office to make sure they'd received the paperwork from Puente High School, and to find out if I was really "in" for the September '38 semester. I don't think I'd ever before been that anxious to get back into school. It was a relief to be told by the registrar that everything looked like it was in good order for me.

### A Job for Bob

I knew I was going to need some money, so I began "job lookin'" right away, even before time for school to start. The manager (I believe his name was Jim) at the Standard (now, Chevron) station hired me for evening help, and also for Saturdays -- if he got in a bind. (He often did, and would phone to ask me to go in. Extra money!)

The station was just across Los Robles and south to Villa Street from where we were living, so it was very handy. And I believe it paid the huge sum of 35¢ <sup>an</sup> ~~and~~ hour.

I was to go to work as soon as I could get down to the station -- after getting home from school. Jim would also work until about seven, then I was to remain until closing time, which was usually around ten o'clock. The first few evenings that I was working, Jim stayed through

until closing time to show me what he wanted me to do. Then I was on my own, and I felt good about the confidence he placed in me.

Believe me, it was "full service" in those days since stations really competed with each other for customer business. Checking the oil and the tires and, of course, washing the windshield, were all standard practice -- and all that for the 18¢-a-gallon cost of the gasoline.

There weren't the great variety of octane levels that there are today, only Regular or Ethyl. I believe we had four sets of pumps: two sets on the Los Robles side, and two on the Villa Street side -- a total of eight pumps. As I recall, that station pumped an average of something over 1,000 gallons a day, which was considered pretty good in those days.

Hardly ever did a customer say "fill 'er up"; it was always two or three, or maybe five gallons at a time; a "fill up" would have been too much to spend at one time.

Credit buying of gasoline was just beginning to become popular, and what a headache that was, especially if other customers were waiting to be served at one or more of the other pumps. A detailed, two-part charge slip had to be filled out by the attendant, complete with the customer's name, address, license number of the car, how many gallons, and the amount of the sale. Then, of course, the customer had to sign it before the "carbon copy" was given to him. (That was long before the era of plastic credit cards!)

I'll never forget an "old fellow" (probably in his sixties) who, about once a week (and always just when I was starting to close up for the day), would come in <sup>with</sup> ~~in~~ his Model "T", get his two or three gallons of Regular gas, then ask me to "check the oil." Now, on a conventional



car this could have been accomplished in a couple of minutes; not so with a "T"! The gas tank was under the passenger seat so, of course, that required lifting out the seat cushion to fill the tank -- or put in two gallons, whichever he wanted that time. "Checking the oil" meant sliding under the car since the "T" Ford "grew up" long before the advent of the "dip stick." There were three petcocks (tiny "faucets"), one above the other, and about an inch apart, on the side of the crankcase -- the "reservoir" that held the oil. To find out if the oil level was near full, the top one was to be turned first. If a drop of oil came out, that indicated the level was in good shape; if not, the middle one was turned next. If it was necessary to try the bottom petcock, and there was still no oil to drip out, that meant some had to be added. As I recall, it would have taken around three or four quarts to fill the crankcase, but it was rare for anyone to ask for more than a quart or two at a time since it cost 25- or 30¢ a quart.

(Servicing that man's Model "T" always reminded me of the days on The Grove, and Mr. Keckley's Model "T" truck -- it was always needing something!)

So, after the "old" gentleman would go chugging on his way, I would get back to closing for the night. First I would read the meters on the pumps which showed the total number of gallons that had been sold from each pump. Those figures were to be recorded on a company form which had been designed for that purpose.

Money, charge slips, etc., would be put into a floor safe (Jim tallied those the next morning), then, after making sure everything was in order, I'd turn off the lights (except for a few security lights) and lock up for the night. After walking home, if I wasn't too tired I would study for an hour or so before going to bed.

I worked at that station for quite a while, until "new management" took it over. After that there were a couple fellows in there full time, and they didn't need any part-time help. But during the time I'd been working at the Standard station I'd gotten acquainted with Cliff, the manager over at the Rio Grande gasoline station on the northwest corner of Euclid and Walnut. I went over there to ask about working for him. As I remember back, it seems like it was only a few days until he called to tell me he could use me, and I was sure happy about that!

As I recall, the salary was the same -- 35¢ an hour, and the price of gasoline was still 18¢ a gallon. My "job description" and the hours I was to work were the same as they'd been at the other station. In fact, the only real difference was that it was farther to walk home -- after locking up at night. *(PERHAPS ONLY A COUPLE MORE BLOCKS.)*

I was really glad for the money I made. I needed it!

### **An Input from Johnny**

It was a real surprise to receive a letter from Johnny Holmes before school had started for the fall term. After reading it, I got excited all over again and had to make another trip to P.J.C. (Pasadena Junior College) to ask more questions.

Johnny had written to tell me that he had been contacted about serving as an instructor in a proposed program that I had already been hearing and reading about, and he strongly encouraged me to look into it for myself.

Because of the looming prospects of the United States getting



involved in the tensions which were gripping Europe, the F.A.A. (Federal Aviation Administration) was considering implementing a flight training program that would be made available through colleges and universities within the State. Johnny wrote that in some cases he was pretty sure it would be offered through the college-level R.O.T.C. program.

As I've already said, I'd heard it being talked about a lot, but I didn't know for sure if it was being considered for Pasadena J.C., so once again I hurried to the admissions office to talk with someone, and to find out more about it. I was told that there was indeed a strong possibility that they'd be implementing the flight training program, but that they had nothing firm on it. They took my name and address, and assured me that they would let me know when they had more information.

At that point, I didn't say anything about it to Mother; I think I already knew what her attitude would be. She'd mentioned something about the proposed program at one time when she'd happened to read about it in the newspaper, and had also commented that she considered it to be "just a scheme on the part of the military to channel young fellows into the Air Force."

Nevertheless, if Johnny was interested in it, so was I!

### **College, At Last!**

September 1938 finally came! I was duly enrolled in Aero-Tech 1, with an Engineering major. I could hardly believe it!

That particular course was famous because in addition to the "book work," the students learned by actually designing and building a flying

airplane during the two-year duration of the course. It was under the direction of Dr. Max Harlow who, I found out later, was extremely well-known in the area of technical education at the college level. I really felt privileged to be in that program.

Then reality set in! I didn't realize how "rusty" I had become during the past two years of being out of school. Math, which had always been my best subject, was all of a sudden very difficult. I had to review the basics, refresh my mind, and really settle down to serious studying. I didn't mind -- it was what I'd been wanting for so long! (And it wasn't "Citriculture"!)

As I recall now, sixty-plus years later, the required subjects for a student with an Engineering major were Math (Calculus, if you had had Algebra and Plane Geometry in high school); and Metalurgy, which dealt with the strengths of various materials, the compatibility of materials, heat treating, annealing and stabilizing materials to acquire varying tensile characteristics.

Then there was Drafting (mechanical drawing), and that included Descriptive Geometry -- the science of plane rotation. All "lofting" is based on the use of Descriptive Geometry, and is used to create and to modify the airflow surfaces of the aircraft.

"Shop" included machine shop, foundry and sheet metal fabrication (including basic riveting, etc.), working to plaster masters for basic contour configurations.

Many hours were devoted to the actual fabrication of the airplane which was being built as the practical part of the Aero-Tech program. Most of the work on the plane was done by students other than those in the Engineering major program, but we managed to get involved -- and no one objected.



Now that I'm reminiscing, I well remember my Basic Calculus class -- it was the first period after lunch, and boy! that was tough! It was all I could do to stay awake! But, bit by bit, I could finally begin to notice that math was getting easier.

The textbook that was used for my Descriptive Geometry class was written by Dr. M. O. Warner. It was so well laid out and explanatory that I found it to be really excellent for helping me recall a lot that had become "fuzzy" in my mind. It was gratifying to finish my first year of junior college with good grades, and I felt that I'd be able to tackle the next year with more confidence.

#### **Input #2 from Johnny**

I had another big surprise when I received a second letter from Johnny Holmes. In it, he told me that he was "getting fat" from "flying back seat" while instructing college students to fly Porterfields (a type of small aircraft).

I was so happy for him! He'd finally made it! "Instructing" was what he'd wanted to do for so long!

But . . . his letter went on: He wanted to know if I had gotten into a flight training class yet. There was a sort of "if not, why not?" attitude conveyed in the way he'd worded his pointed question.

By then, that program had been incorporated at Pasadena J.C., and I had already been giving a lot of thought to possibly pursuing it. My thinking was that perhaps I might be able to get my basic training at government expense, and then possibly work into commercial flying. But

I really knew that this government-funded college program had been primarily set up to supply the Air Force with potential pilots. And there was another drawback to even giving it halfway serious consideration: Since I wasn't yet twenty-one, I would have to have my mother's consent and signature, and I certainly knew that she would never go along with that. It would have been a waste of breath and time to have even tried to discuss it with her.

So, I wrote to thank Johnny for his interest and encouragement, and went on to tell him that I'd decided it would be best for me to continue to prepare for the field of Aeronautical Engineering, and forgo the flight training program.

That was a big decision for me to make at that particular crossroad in my life, but as the years came and went, I was never sorry.

### **More Decisions -- Major Ones!**

By 1938 and '39, things in Europe had reached a boiling point! Hitler and his henchmen were intimidating and running roughshod over people and countries in Central Europe. The collapse of Poland allowed Hitler's armies access to the Balkan countries -- still, war had not been declared in Europe, but it was threatening!

It looked as though the United States would not escape being drawn into it eventually. Many American companies, seeing the "handwriting on the wall," were starting to increase their work forces, and to instigate defense-type programs.

North American Aviation, a small company that had recently moved to



California from New Jersey, was already gearing-up for wartime production. Some of my friends had looked into North American's hiring policy and pay scale, and were well-impressed.

Should I look into it, too? Or should I continue with my schooling?

### **"Girl Trouble"**

Another major "factor" was imposing a considerable amount of influence on me: Her name was Lenore Cain.

Lenore and I had become very good friends -- after I had convinced her that I was only kidding when I'd teased her the first time she'd attended Christian Endeavor, and was with Melvin Blackwill. That was in the Spring of '35.

I made it a point of finding out that Melvin wasn't really "dating" her -- he'd just brought her along that first time because her parents and she were visiting with his family that Sunday afternoon and evening. When it got to be the time that he usually left home to drive to church for Christian Endeavor, Melvin asked her if she'd like to go along. I found out later that it was nothing short of a miracle that her mother said it would be all right since Lenore wasn't "allowed to go with boys."

Lenore had liked the group of young people so she and her parents continued to attend almost every Sunday, even though they lived on a ranch several miles away from Otterbein, near Brea.

She and I would spend a lot of time talking together, and we always

hit it off real good. Sometimes we'd sit together in church -- if her parents weren't there; often we'd be in the same group when the church gang went to someone's house for a party, or an after-church "sing."

Before Mother and I moved back to Pasadena from Otterbein, I had become increasingly aware of the fact that, from time to time, Lenore would be "escorted" to church by one guy, or another -- not anyone from Bell Memorial Church, so none of our gang knew them. Of course she'd introduce them, but I didn't care all that much about getting acquainted with them. What I was thinking concerned the fact that it was an indication that since she'd had her eighteenth birthday in March of '38, maybe her parents were finally consenting to her "dating." But I was busy "going with" one or the other of the gals in the church, and since I knew that Mother and I would soon be moving back to Pasadena, I didn't try to interfere.

But just a short time after I'd gotten back to Pasadena and into school, and was really missing the kids at Otterbein, I decided to write to Lenore to ask if it would be all right with her if I drove out to see her. I was glad when her reply came in the mail, and I was soon on my way to that ranch in Brea Canyon! It didn't seem surprising to either of us that those trips to the ranch became more and more frequent.

Lenore had graduated from Brea-Olinda High School in 1936, the same year that I had graduated from Puente High, but she had gone on into junior college that same fall. After she had graduated from Fullerton J.C. in June of '38, she worked at the downtown Los Angeles Bullock's store, at 7th and Broadway. She rode into L.A. on the big "Red Line" bus from Brea, and was only working four hours a day, so she was having a hard time deciding if it was really worth what it was costing her for

bus fare. We spent hours talking about each of our concerns, and found it was becoming more difficult to say good-bye when I had to leave the ranch for the drive back to Pasadena. It seemed crazy that we had once lived so close together, and now I was driving almost thirty miles to get to see her for even just a little while.

It wasn't easy to be going to school, working after school and once in a while on Saturdays, getting homework done, and juggling a lot of other "complications," such as convincing Mother that I "needed" the car. (Every once in a while she'd still remind me that it was her car -- even though she didn't drive, and I'd used my own money for buying quite a few tools for it, took care of most of the maintenance, and always paid for the gasoline I used.) But somehow I made it work.

Lenore often teased me by telling me that I wasn't really interested in her, but that I liked visiting with her so she and I could go horseback riding together. She'd known how interested I was in horses, because I'd told her a lot about how I enjoyed going over to Jeff Johnson's to help him handle the horses he was boarding, during the time that Mother and I were living in Otterbein. We never seemed to run out of things to talk about.

Lenore's dad seemed to like me, and her mother was always nice to me. However, her mother had become quite ill, and was often resting back in a bedroom when I'd go out to see Lenore.

Early in 1939, well after the Christmas shopping spree, Bullock's laid off a lot of their part-time sales people. Lenore was one of them. It was hard on her to not have the little bit of money she was earning, but she was also tired of the long bus trip each day.

A long-time friend of her family, Mrs. Giller, asked her to ~~go~~ stay



with her and her husband (they lived in Montebello) so she could do some sewing for her. Mr. and Mrs. Giller were into "high society" kind of stuff, and she wanted a lot of fancy clothes. Lenore was very good at sewing, so she talked with her dad about it, and he thought that might be a good idea. I liked that arrangement -- Montebello was a lot closer than Brea Canyon to Pasadena. The Gillers were a nice middle-aged couple who had never had children, so they seemed to enjoy me, too.

While she was with the Gillers, Lenore got acquainted with a lot of Mrs. Giller's "club friends," and they wanted her to sew for them, too. Then, the man who owned a dry cleaning shop in Montebello, the shop where Mrs. Giller took their personal cleaning to be done, offered to let Lenore use a corner of his shop to start a little sewing business of her own. All she'd have to "pay" him for rent would be an agreement to do any mending that needed to be done on the clothes that he was cleaning and pressing.

The Gillers understood the difficult circumstances that the Cains were experiencing because of Lenore's mother's illness. They told her that if she decided to go ahead with the little "shop," she would be welcome to continue to stay at their home. (I'm sure she helped do some of the housecleaning, and things like that, but she didn't mind because the Gillers were always nice to her.)

It meant a lot to both of us to just be together and talk. Since she was the youngest in her family, she told me that she'd never felt that she had anyone to really "listen" to her. And, of course, with things like they were at home for me, I could easily understand what she meant. We seemed to have a lot in common. It was good to be able to just "listen" to each other -- that was about all either of us could afford.

Lenore and I realized that our long-time friendship had deepened, and our love for each other was growing tremendously.

It was beginning to seem likely that Lenore's mother wasn't going to get well, so things were very unsettled for her family. Loraine, her sister-in-law, came from El Centro once in a while to help take care of her; then, later, her older sister, Alyce, came from somewhere in northern California. (Her next-older sister, Mildred, was living back East because her husband was in the Navy, so she couldn't help.)

Lenore didn't start with the sewing shop right away, but was still planning to do that when things had settled down for their family. She was back out at her home in Brea Canyon most of the time, so I had to phone to find out where to go see her -- there, or at the Gillers'. When I could manage it, I liked to go out to the ranch on Sunday afternoons, then she and I would go over to Bell Memorial for Christian Endeavor and evening church -- just like when we were "kids." Only, it was a lot different because we got to go together, we didn't have to just wish we could!

### **The Engagement Ring**

It was Spring of 1939. Lenore was nineteen then, and I would be twenty-one later that year, in October. I was finishing my first year at junior college, a year that I felt very satisfied with -- as far as academic achievements were concerned.

I was so glad to be away from The Grove situation, and onto a course that would eventually lead to a future that I felt had great

potential. Yet -- major decisions which would affect that future for the rest of our lives lay ahead.

Lenore and I spent much time talking about what would be best. We both wanted so much to be married. Would the threat of war affect us? What about her mother's condition? What should we do?

Without telling Lenore what I had in mind, I decided to take the first step. But my plan was going to require some money. How was I going to get it?

As I considered my "worldly goods," the only thing I could think of that might be of significant monetary value was my Winchester 30-06 rifle -- the one I'd hoped to use "someday" for deer hunting in Utah. It was still a treasured possession, but the only times I'd ever been able to use it was for target shooting.

Now, with my overwhelming desire to raise money for that which far exceeded anything else to me, I put the rifle in its case and headed for the gun shop down on Raymond Avenue, near Walnut Street. It had been a long time since I'd been in that shop, so I was very glad to see that the owner who'd known me so well, when I was younger, was behind the counter. He remembered me, and asked where I'd been for so long.

After renewing old acquaintances, I told him of my intentions and the reason for wanting to sell the gun. He seemed to be genuinely interested and understanding, and was anxious to see it.

I took the rifle out of its case and handed it to him; he was very complimentary -- it was indeed a beautiful gun. I told him that I had never had the opportunity I'd hoped for to really hunt with it, but had only used it on shooting ranges.

He looked it over very carefully, said something about it looking



brand new, and I could tell he was very impressed. He told me that normally he would only take a gun like that on consignment, but since I had told him my reason for wanting to sell it he went ahead and made me an offer, thus avoiding any delay in my getting the money I needed.

The amount he offered me for the gun was almost as much as what I had paid for it! I couldn't have been happier!

So, with that money, plus a little more from my service station attendant's wealth, I went down to Colorado Boulevard from the gun shop and into the jewelry store that I'd "visited" so many times. This time I bought the ring that I had been looking at for weeks!

I was so anxious to give it to Lenore, but I waited until the evening of May 1st, 1939.

She had happened to tell me that she was planning to stay with her folks at the ranch all of that week, so she could help with her mother's care. That's how I was able to surprise her without having to phone first. She was surprised when I showed up at the door. I told her that I had just decided on the spur of the moment that it would be nice to take her for a little drive up into Tonner Canyon, so she could get away for a little while. Then, she was really surprised when I slipped that ring on her finger. (Knowing her like I do, I'm sure she probably cried a little.)

We spent a lot of time talking about our circumstances -- all over again, but with a different slant this time. We agreed that in no way could we even think of setting a wedding date, but I told her that I'd wanted to get this much of our planning settled, and I wanted her to be able to show her engagement ring to her mother.

When I went back out to the ranch the following Sunday, Lenore told

me that at first her dad was upset when she showed him her ring, but after she explained to him that we would not be getting married for quite some time, he was pleased. He had told her that he would like having me for his son-in-law, but that his first thought was that he'd be "losing" both her mother and her too close together.

Lenore told her dad that I'd wanted her to have her engagement ring so her mother could see it, too, and he thought that was very nice. Then, together they'd gone to her mother's bedside to tell her of our plans -- for "someday" -- and to show her ring to her mother. Mrs. Cain had responded happily, but we're not sure how much she really understood.

Just a few days later her mother was taken by ambulance to Orange County Hospital, in Santa Ana. (That was the hospital which preceded the University of California, Irvine, Medical Center. The small brick building is still there -- "lost" somewhere among the buildings which make up the UCIMC complex.) Lenore's mother passed away there on May 19, 1939, the day that would have been my dad's sixty-sixth birthday.

It was just her parents and the two of us who knew about her engagement ring for quite some time. There were too many circumstances to work our way through before making a "big announcement."

Yes, there were many factors in the equation to be sorted out! It's too bad that neither of us knew the Lord so that we could have been praying together about our situation. But how we do praise the Lord for guiding us; as we look back over our marriage which is nearing sixty years, we can see His hand in so many things.

## School vs. Work -- What Should I Do?

While Lenore was a student at Fullerton J.C., she met a girl who was to become about her closest friend for many years -- Pauline Alexander. In July of 1939, Lenore was Pauline's maid-of-honor when she was married to Tom Self. The fact that they were two or three years older than we didn't seem to make any difference, and the four of us enjoyed many good times together.

At the time of Pauline and Tom's wedding in 1939, Lenore was trying to get her little sewing business "off the ground," and her dad was having a hard time getting adjusted to his loneliness. There were so many things that seemed unsettled for us.

But, of course, right after Lenore had graduated from Fullerton J.C., in June of '38, she had gone to work at the Bullock's store in downtown L.A., and it seems that I recall that Pauline had gotten a job at the King Kelly Marmalade factory, in Bellflower, her home town. Tom was still away from home -- at a CCC\* camp in Northern California, and he and Pauline kept letters going back and forth like crazy. She could hardly wait for him to get back to Bellflower so they could begin to plan for their wedding. They hadn't quite figured out what they'd use for money, a dilemma that Lenore and I understood very well!

\*("CCC" was a commonly used abbreviation, back in the '30s. It stood for "Civilian Conservation Corps," an agency that had been set up by the Government. It was an emergency program organized to give job skills training and low-paying employment for young fellows who would



enlist for a certain period of time -- I don't remember how long the recruit periods were for. It was almost impossible to find work during the Great Depression, so that plan was indeed a godsend.)

As I recall, soon after his term in the Corp was completed, and when he was back home in Bellflower, Tom got a job at the marmalade factory, too. That was what they had going for themselves, financially, when they got married in July. It didn't take them very long to find out that their combined incomes added up to a very meager lifestyle, so, after just a few months Tom began looking for a job that would pay more.

Sometime later in 1939 he went to work for North American Aviation. He was hired into an engineering support capacity, and Lenore and I were very happy for Tom and Pauline. It was a real encouragement to them, especially since his technical "skills" had been learned during his time in the CCC.

Every time the two couples of us were together, Tom had nothing but praise for North American, and would subtly encourage me to "look into it." It was quite impressive to hear such favorable things about that same company which some of my friends in the Aero-tech classes at Pasadena J.C. were interested in.

It was tempting! What was I doing in school? More decisions!

Together (how good it was to have each other to talk things over with, then make decisions -- together!) Lenore and I decided it would be best for me to return to junior college for my second year. I had done so well my first year, and we knew that the education I was receiving was going to be valuable for when I did decide to seek employment (other than working in the service station!).

**Downs 'n Ups, and Celebrations!**

When I resumed my classes at Pasadena J.C. in the Fall of '39, aiming for my A.A. degree in Aeronautical Engineering, things just weren't the same as they'd been the year before. Of course, by then Mother knew that I'd given Lenore her engagement ring, and that was an added reason that, around home, tension was high -- and getting higher.

For months, while still at The Grove, I had wished to be doing exactly what I was doing now -- being back in school, preparing for a career in Engineering. But because of the tension, and the frustration caused by the tension, I found myself working late, or finding any other excuse I could to be away from home and the disagreeable situation that existed there.

Such an environment was certainly not conducive for coping with the hours of study that I should be putting in, and I knew within myself that I could not continue in this way without experiencing major problems. I managed to keep my grades up, but it sure wasn't easy!

I certainly did not want to jeopardize the future that I was so desirous of establishing for Lenore and me. . . . What to do?

**Changes for Lenore**

Lenore's sewing "business" hadn't panned out like she'd hoped it would, so she'd finally gone back into the L.A. Bullock's store to talk

with her former department manager. She told Lenore that they just weren't hiring, but she suggested that Lenore go to the May Company, down at 8th and Broadway, because she knew they were getting ready to open a new store.

That paid off! Because of her past experience, and the fact that she had taken classes in Commercial Retailing at Fullerton J.C., they hired Lenore to be one of the "beginning crew" in their new store. She'd have to move into Los Angeles because it would be too far to commute from Brea. The pay would be 25¢ an hour.

May Company was pioneering a whole new idea in the department store concept: They were preparing to open a "satellite" store out in the Wilshire District. It would be the first time that a major department store would be testing the success (or failure) of having a branch store out in a suburban area. (That was the forerunner of "shopping malls.") The location of the new store was on the northeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Fairfax Avenue.

The following weekend, Lenore's dad drove her over into Los Angeles where they bought a newspaper, and began checking out the "Rooms for Rent" ads. They decided on a place that was on the northeast corner of Olympic Boulevard and 4th Avenue. It would be too far for her to walk to work; instead, she'd have to walk to the corner of Crenshaw and Wilshire where she could get the red double-decker "London" bus. (A fleet of them had been purchased, then brought over from England for a novel and popular mode of public transportation on Wilshire Boulevard.)

Mrs. Neitzel, the woman who was renting rooms in her home, was a very pleasant widow lady, and Lenore and her dad sensed that she would be a caring, mother-type person (and that instinct proved to be very



true!). It was going to be a traumatic venture for Lenore to live in the city, and be so far from her home in Brea Canyon. The rent would be \$3.00 a week, but it included "kitchen privileges," so she wouldn't have to pay for "meals out."

Both Lenore and I were pleased that she finally had a "steady job," and it made me all the more anxious to have a "steady income," too.

### **My Twenty-first Birthday**

After so many discouragements for her, Lenore's new job was a reason for celebration, but we may not have had an "official" one yet. Then she asked me if I could possibly skip working at the service station on a certain evening after school, and pick her up at the new May Company store where she was working. Knowing how much she wanted me to do it, I certainly made that arrangement -- and even convinced Mother that I "needed" the car for that evening. I don't remember for sure if the date was on October 15, 1939, but I do know that it was at least close to it. I don't know if Lenore and I had even talked much about the significance of that day -- we always seemed to have "weighty" things to discuss and decide.

(Picking her up at that new location became very interesting for me, as time went on: The new store was just a block or so west of the La Brea Tar Pits. I had often heard of that historic place, but had never visited it. So any time that I could get to the store a little before time to meet her, I'd spend time walking around in the park that was the location of the ponds of tar and the prehistoric exhibits that are to this day very interesting.)

Lenore seemed especially excited when she came out of the "Employees Only" door that late afternoon. After we got into the car, she began giving me directions for driving. We wound up at a parking lot down on Olive Street, in downtown Los Angeles, then walked to the then-famous Clifton's Cafeteria.

I was so surprised! I was secretly hoping she'd received her weekly pay envelope -- I'd heard that dinners at that place could cost as much as seventy-five cents or a dollar!

About halfway through dinner she said, "Happy twenty-first birthday!" and from across the table she handed me a card and a small gift-wrapped package. It was a tremendous surprise for me!

(Now, I'll take time out to explain that for as long as I could remember, birthdays had never been observed in my home. Occasionally, when I was just a kid I'd been invited to some other kid's birthday party, and I always thought it would be a lot of fun to have one of my own, but there never was one. I suppose it was because Dad was gone so much for speaking engagements, so birthdays, Christmases, my folks' anniversaries, etc., never had any special recognition. Mother just wasn't one who did things like that. I don't even remember how old I was before I even knew the date of my folks' wedding anniversary. I don't know if Mother and Dad had had "special day" celebrations in earlier years -- there's a lot I never did know about them.)

Of course, I had been looking forward to my twenty-first birthday because I had hoped it would be leverage for a little more independence. But to think that Lenore had wanted to make such a special occasion of my birthday was very meaningful to me.

Then, when I opened the gift I was surprised all over again! It

*beautiful*  
was a Waltham wristwatch! I had never had a quality watch, and never a wristwatch. I couldn't believe it; I was speechless! I had never experienced an evening like that; such an outpouring of love I will never forget.

### Back to Reality

The birthday celebration had been like a dream! All too soon it was time to come back to the real world. Mother expressed her feelings about "a girl giving a boy such an expensive and personal gift as a wristwatch . . . ." I got the point. But now I was twenty-one!

The next time Lenore and I were with Tom and Pauline Self, and he was talking more about the good job he now had at North American Aviation, I began asking him more questions about the employment outlook there.

Tom encouraged me to make an appointment with a Jack Sigafoose, in the personnel office, and get some of my specific questions answered.

I continued to seriously consider that suggestion, but I stuck it out in school until time for Christmas break. When I went to the North American Aviation personnel office for the previously scheduled appointment with Mr. Sigafoose, I took along a list of the classes I'd been taking at school, my grade reports, and the Social Security card that had been issued to me when I'd gone to work at the Blue Goose Citrus Packing House, in Pomona, in January of '37.

Mr. Sigafoose hired me! I would be in Engineering Layout, or what was known as "Lofting" in those days. I was to report to work on



January 4th, 1940. My starting pay would be 50¢ an hour, exactly the same as I'd made when I was working for Flannery's Spraying Service. However, this job would be in my chosen field, the work hours would be steady, not seasonal, and there would be opportunities for advancement!

I could hardly wait to tell Lenore! We were both so happy about my new job, and the fact that -- now -- maybe we could soon start planning for our marriage. We remembered a spot that had become a favorite place for us, out on Bluff Road, in Montebello. We pooled our pennies, nickels and dimes, bought a few items at a delicatessen, and drove out there to a grassy overlook point for our "Celebration Picnic"!

Another crossroad maneuvered, another decision made -- together!

### **A Very Special Christmas**

Christmas Day of 1939 was when I experienced my first real "family Christmas." In my own home as a boy, because of our little family with no close relatives living in the area, a "family" Christmas just wasn't possible. So, like birthdays and other usually elaborately celebrated "special days," Christmas was not a "big deal."

I believe, too, without TV and the media coverage that we have today, there was not the "Holiday Frenzy," and more thought was given to the real meaning of the day.

Yes, we would exchange gifts -- usually just one apiece, but I don't remember ever having a Christmas tree (not that my folks were opposed to it, we just never got around to it), or elaborate decorations. As I've said before, there's so much I don't remember.

But I will always remember Christmas of 1939! Lenore's Dad and her sister Alyce made a special point of inviting me to be with their family, at the ranch in Brea Canyon. Lenore's brother Al, and his wife Loraine, and her other sister Mildred, and her husband Floyd, weren't there; but Alyce and her husband, Henry Yakel, and Carolyn and Lynn, their two children, had come from their home in northern California. It was going to be different for all of them, since it would be their family's first Christmas without Lenore's mother.

I hadn't really known what to expect, but I made sure that I took gifts for Lenore. I had bought her a white "bunny fur" jacket and a dainty gold chain necklace with a gold cross pendant. She was so pleased, and with her dark hair she looked beautiful in the white fur jacket. I was so proud of her. And I believe she still has the gold cross necklace.

That "family Christmas" was a day I will never forget. There was a Christmas tree, a nice dinner, and gifts for everyone. I don't remember what they were, but I know that the warmth of that day stayed with me long after the day was over, and it was a good feeling to think that I would soon be a part of their family.

### **The End of '39**

New Year's Eve, 1939. There was usually a "Watch Night Service" at Bell Memorial Church in Otterbein, and Lenore and I always went to any of those activities that we could. Even though I don't remember for sure, that was probably how we celebrated that New Year's Eve.

The "logistics" for attending things at Otterbein were somewhat complicated, since she was living in Los Angeles and I was living in Pasadena. But getting together with our old Christian Endeavor gang remained very important to us.

Lenore's dad continued to live alone at the ranch in Brea Canyon, after her mother had passed away, so on weekends, and other special times, Lenore would ride the commute bus from Los Angeles to Brea. She would phone her dad to let him know she was there, and he'd go down to pick her up at the corner of Central Avenue and Brea Canyon Road. I would drive out from Pasadena, meet her there at the ranch, then we'd go over to Otterbein together -- for whatever was going on. If that New Year's Eve was like they usually were, there was probably an "after church" party at Florence's. No matter what, it was always fun!

We had many reasons for celebrating on that New Year's Eve of 1939! Major decisions had been made during the year: Lenore and I had become engaged; she was working as a salesgirl at the new May Company store, and I was going to be starting my new job in just a few more days!

Maybe we could soon set our wedding date! We were both really looking forward to 1940!

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## PART SEVEN: NEW EXPERIENCES

1940 - 1941

### Chapter ~~32~~ 33

#### What's Ahead?

Believe me, it's easier to look back now than it was to look ahead then!

When I told my mother that I wasn't going back to college after Christmas break, but, instead, I'd been hired to start work in the Engineering department at North American Aviation, on January 4, 1940, there was quite an outburst! She let me know emphatically that I was "doing the wrong thing" by leaving school in the middle of my last year of junior college; "I would live to regret it" -- and on and on!

She knew that Lenore and I wanted to be married, and she considered my going to work, as opposed to continuing my education, as a step in that direction. Indeed, she was right!

Being my mother's only son (only child!) caused her to attach to me some degree of security for herself, especially now that Dad was gone. Not security in a financial way, but in material assistance: driving, doing repairs at the two residences that she had rented out, and at the duplex which we were renting for ourselves to live in, taking care of the car maintenance, and such things. I'm sure the idea of my getting married actually frightened her, and gave her a sense of insecurity.

For me, things at home had been very stressful to say the least. I would have moved out, but I didn't have the money, and I wouldn't have known where to go. I'm sure that it was best that I didn't.

Within myself, I knew that I couldn't have continued to keep up my grades at school, anyway; I just couldn't concentrate on homework with all of the stress and turmoil at home.

I could hardly wait for the morning of January 4, 1940! It was good to know that I was going to "punch-in" on a time clock at North American, at the corner of Aviation Boulevard and Imperial Highway, in Inglewood, instead of at the Blue Goose Packing House, in Pomona!

I felt as though I had reached a crossroad, and now I was finally heading in the right direction.

#### **Commuter Woes**

It's inevitable for an employee to have to find the best way for getting to and from work. That wasn't easy back in the '40s. There was no bus service for that "great distance" from Pasadena to Inglewood, and there were no freeways. ("Freeway?" What's that!) Not only was it expensive for me to be driving by myself, but it was also a matter of putting so many miles on Mother's car.

I didn't want to create any car problems that would jeopardize my being able to use it on Sundays -- to go see Lenore. (Of course, being a salesgirl meant that she had to work every Saturday. So, after work on Saturdays, she would repeat her commute routine -- via the public buses -- from Los Angeles to Brea.)

Our "dating" was usually confined to my going out to her home in Brea Canyon ~~very~~ early on Sunday mornings. We'd go to church at Otterbein, spend a little time with her dad on Sunday afternoons, then

I'd drive her back into L.A., back to Mrs. Neitzel's house where she was living.

(I remember once that we included a little variety on our way back to Mrs. Neitzel's: We stopped at The Broken Drum, a hamburger and ice cream place somewhere over on Olympic Boulevard, and ordered malts -- like the "old days" at Shartel's, in Pomona. Prices had gone up by then, though, now they were fifteen cents each instead of a dime!

(When it came time to pay the thirty-cent check -- no sales tax back then! -- I came up with two dimes and Lenore had a nickel and three pennies. The "soda jerk" wasn't very happy when we couldn't produce the two more pennies! After our financial picture began to improve somewhat, after we both had "steady jobs," we stopped at The Broken Drum at another time when we were passing by, and gave the man the two pennies. Yes, he remembered!)

Then, after saying good-bye to her at Mrs. Neitzel's front door, I'd drive back to Pasadena. The next morning I'd be off to work again at the Inglewood North American plant. Oh, we were looking forward to when we could be married, and not have to have so many "good-byes." (Maybe we'd be spending less on gasoline, too!)

After I'd been working for a few weeks, I heard about a man who lived in Pasadena, drove a large car, and took "riders." His name was George (I'm sure he had a last name, but I don't remember it; maybe I never knew it!). He worked in a shop department, so it took me a while to find him. I was so glad when I did get to talk with him! He told me that he would have room for me in his car, and that it wouldn't be too far out of his way for him to pick me up each morning -- right at our house on Los Robles. I was almost afraid to ask "how much?" but it was



a very fair amount (I don't remember exactly how much), and it would sure beat buying gasoline for the little Chevy!

That ride in George's big old Franklin, along with three other guys besides George, worked out very well, and I really appreciated it. I was liking my work, too. Lenore and I didn't get to spend much time with Tom and Pauline Self those days, because all of us were pretty well tied down with our jobs. However, when we could be with them it was sure good to be able to join in with Tom in "talking shop," instead of just listening to all of the good things he had to say about working at North American Aviation!

### **Surprise!**

Life is full of little surprises; some, not so little!

I came home from work one evening (I'm sure it must have been a Friday evening because I remember having a very busy Saturday that week), then, after supper I needed to take care of some errand -- I don't remember just what it was. I went out to the garage, unlocked the padlock, swung back the double doors, and . . . NO CAR! I couldn't believe it!

I hurried back into the house and asked Mother if she knew the car was missing. Then she announced that she had been thinking for some time that there was no need for her to continue keeping the car. I now had a ride to work, she was able to walk to the market, ride the bus to town, and on and on! That day she'd decided to phone someone to come look at it. He'd made an offer, so she sold it to him!

Wow! I couldn't believe it! She had not said one word to me about it. I asked her about the car tools that I had bought, ones that I kept in the trunk. She had forgotten about them, so they were gone, too!

Suddenly I realized she didn't have her car, and neither did I! How was I going to get out to see Lenore on Sundays? Or do most anything -- without a car? Boy! what a shocker!

I'm sure it must have been the very next day, a Saturday, that I walked (what else!) to a large car dealership down on Colorado Boulevard, and started looking. After walking back and forth, between several rows of used cars, I saw a sage-green 1936 Pontiac -- a really nice-looking 2-door coupe with low mileage.

I drove it, I liked it, so I bought it!

By that time I had enough money saved up for a down payment, and I was now past my 21st birthday, so, for the first time, I could do such a thing -- independent of Mother.

I drove the car home, and then it was Mother's turn to be surprised! Of course I got the expected lecture about "going into debt." And, "What are you going to do if you lose your job? I'm surely not going to pay for it!" Oh boy, it was delightful!

I could hardly wait until the next day, Sunday, to show it to Lenore! She was thrilled with it -- it was our car, our first car!

### **A June Wedding? Not Quite!**

Now that the car issue was settled (and in my name!), and the fact that both Lenore and I were becoming well-established in our jobs, we

began planning toward a June wedding. We knew that it would be a shoe-string lifestyle for a while, but at least we'd be together!

But . . . (why are there so often "buts"?).

Sometime in the late winter, I think it was in February, I was called to the phone at work. It should be mentioned that "being called to the phone at work" was a rather rare happening for a new employee. Nevertheless, that's what happened.

Lenore had asked someone to pull any strings they could to get in touch with me. She was in the hospital! At California Lutheran hospital, somewhere around 12th and Hope Streets, in downtown Los Angeles. She had been taken there from the May Company out at Wilshire and Fairfax, and an appendicitis attack was suspected.

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As new as I was on the job, and as precious as every hour's pay was, I still told my boss the situation and he was very understanding. He told me to take off whatever time I needed to. But, since I was riding in George's car, I couldn't leave work when I got the phone call.

I drove my car to work the next day, so I could leave for a few hours to go into L.A. to see Lenore in the hospital.

Believe me, that was a "new experience" for me! I didn't realize the emotional impact that it would be to see the girl I loved in pain, and in the hospital! The doctors had ordered several tests before the decision for surgery was made, so it hadn't been scheduled yet.

Lenore was so concerned because she knew the small medical coverage that she had through her job as a salesgirl would in no way take care of all of the costs. She was so disappointed since it would very likely mean that our plans for a June wedding would have to be postponed because of the "money" situation. I tried to reassure her by telling her that the most important thing would be for her to be well again.



Hospital stays were certainly different in those days than they are today! She was there for two weeks! And, sure enough, it took the money we'd been saving together for our "June wedding," plus a fifty dollar loan from Lenore's sister, Mildred, to "bail her out."

Mildred's husband, Floyd, was in the Navy, and was on duty aboard ship, so she was staying with their dad, out at the ranch, for a few weeks. That was fortunate for Lenore: Mildred picked her up from the hospital when she was released, took her out to the ranch, too, and was very attentive during her time of convalescing.

(Now I remember for sure that all of this happened in February, because that's where Lenore "celebrated" her twentieth birthday, in March of 1940 -- recuperating at the ranch.)

Lenore's supervisor was very thoughtful in keeping in touch with her by phone, and encouraged her to return to work as soon as she could. As it turned out, it seemed that the May Company, and all of the other department stores, were getting into high gear for the Easter rush, and they didn't want to hire and train a new girl to fill in for Lenore. She wasn't feeling real strong when she did go back to work, but she was wanting to start getting her "pay envelope" (cash, not a check for salesgirls in those days) again. She was anxious to help toward getting Mildred paid back, and again start saving a little bit toward our wedding -- now postponed to some unknown date in the future. (We were getting used to that!)

When the Easter sales rush was over, "returns" had all been taken care of, and business at the store had quieted down, Lenore's "thoughtful" supervisor invited her to the fancy tea room, on an upper floor there at the May Company (that was a "first" for Lenore!), and

while sipping their tea, she told Lenore that they'd no longer be needing her! (Later, Lenore figured out that there were probably two reasons for her being laid off: first, her hospital bill had cost the store a little more than they wanted to spend on a salesgirl, and she knew that she was not an aggressive and "pushy" salesperson; she enjoyed people, but she didn't approve of trying to talk them into something more expensive than they wanted to pay.)

Being laid off really devastated her! She had to give up her room at Mrs. Neitzel's, and her dad helped her move back out to the ranch. Then, Lenore began using her dad's car to drive to different places to apply for a job, but nothing seemed to click for her.

One day she was pleasantly surprised by a phone call from our mutual friend, Alice Cooper. (Yes, the same "Cooper family" that my dad had bought The Shack from out there at Otterbein! And, it was to the "Coopers' house" where my mother or I would walk to use their phone, when we were living in The Shack.) Alice was several years older than Lenore, but they had become very good friends from the time they first met. It had pleased Lenore, too, that in the more recent months Alice had begun confiding that she and Johnny Holmes were becoming "very interested" in each other. That was exciting for Lenore and me since, as I've mentioned several times, Johnny had been one of my closest friends for a long time.

Back to the subject: Alice was a supervisor for the telephone company by then, and working in, of all places, Pasadena! Alice had called Lenore that day to invite her to come up to Pasadena to have lunch with her.

Lenore's dad was very willing for her to use the car for something

fun, for a change. (Mr. Cain was really a great person! I always liked being with him -- and I don't mean just because I could ride horseback out there at the ranch.) Lenore had never given any thought to the fact that Alice Cooper's older brother was some kind of an executive with the Bell Telephone Company. As it turned out, Alice wanted him to meet Lenore, and discuss with her the possibility of a job with the phone company!

Lenore told me later that after lunch with Alice in a very nice Pasadena restaurant (Alice picked up the tab for the lunch, much to Lenore's relief!), she took Lenore to her brother's office so she could introduce them to each other. (That had been previously planned between the two of them.) After talking with her for a while, Mr. Cooper advised her to go to the Telephone Company office in Beverly Hills. He told Lenore to call for an appointment with the supervisor there, and that he would let her know ahead of time that he was recommending her.

Within a day or so, she followed his advice; within another day or so, she had a job as a telephone switchboard operator, at the Bell Telephone office in Beverly Hills! The salary would be \$15.00 a week, for a forty-hour week. Not "cash in an envelope" anymore -- a check!

- SPLIT  
SHIFT →

So, once again she and her dad took off -- to find a room in a residence that would be close enough for her to walk to work. The supervisor at the phone company had an address for her to follow up on -- a retired couple who wanted a "telephone company girl" to live in their spare bedroom. It probably cost about the same as she'd been paying to Mrs. Neitzel -- \$3.00 a week. Her new "landlords" were Mr. and Mrs. Fitzgerald.

It was a pleasant job, and Lenore enjoyed it a lot. The big



drawback was that the new employees had to work "split shifts," and always on Saturdays. The gals who'd been with the company for some time always got the most desirable hours, and certain ones wanted to work on Sundays since that meant extra pay for them.

She usually worked from ten 'til two, then from six to ten in the evenings, so that made it too late on Saturdays for her to make the several bus changes that were required for her to get from Beverly Hills to downtown Los Angeles in time to get the last bus that went out to Brea. Our Sundays at Otterbein really got messed up, but I'd pick her up at the Fitzgeralds' house on Sunday mornings, and we'd go to the beach, or out to Bellflower to see Pauline and Tom, or maybe play miniature golf -- if I couldn't get to Beverly Hills until afternoon. We tried hard to have at least some time together!

It wasn't easy for us, but we managed. Once again we could start saving together for our wedding -- for "someday."

I haven't happened to mention anything about Lenore's dad's work, and why he couldn't offer much financial help to her.

For several years, he had worked as the pasture foreman for the Arden Dairy, but at just about the same time that Lenore's mother had passed away, the Arden Dairy moved all of their pastured cattle up to the Lucerne Valley, and dropped their lease on the 5,000-acre pasture-land in Brea Canyon. (Most of that land was owned by Shell Oil Company, but was leased out for grazing land. There was plenty of room for scattered oil wells and large storage tanks here and there, all enclosed in fenced areas.)

Because of her mother's illness, her dad couldn't accept Arden's

offer to move to the new location near Porterville, and continue working for them as their pasture foreman. It seems that he received a small government pension of some kind, so, because he loved the location in Brea Canyon so much, he made an arrangement with the land-owners to pay a monthly rent on just the small acreage where the house and barns were situated, on the south side of Brea Canyon Road, two miles north of Brea.

Lenore had told me that the small amount he paid for rent used up most of his pension income, and about all he had for his living expenses was what he could earn from boarding two or three horses, and raising a few calves until they were ready for selling to meat packing houses. What Mr. Cain lacked in money, he certainly made up in good will. He had a heart of gold, and would do anything he could to help a fellow.

Of course Lenore's brother and her two sisters were much older than she, and they were no longer dependent on their dad. But he was a man who was "always there" for each of them, and would help them in any way he could. He was really a great guy!

So, with each of our home circumstances as they were, Lenore and I accepted the fact that our wedding would have to be our own financial responsibility. We could probably have been married by the pastor in the parsonage living room, or by a Justice of the Peace in his office, but from the time we were first engaged we'd dreamed of being married in that little Bell Memorial Church in Otterbein, where we had first met.

But, by then we knew it wouldn't be a June wedding -- a least not in June of 1940.

**Introducing: Mr. & Mrs. Robert Wenger Honline!**

From my very first day at North American Aviation, I really enjoyed my work. Needless to say, I was very pleased when it was announced that we would be going on a regular six-day work week for at least a few months. We had already been working a couple ten-hour days during the week, so now with the Saturday work it would all add up to a lot of overtime hours. That would help greatly toward Lenore's and my savings.

With the future looking bright, we decided to try again to "set the date." In order to give more time between holidays for military scheduling, there were several years during that period of time that, by presidential decree, the day for observing Thanksgiving had been set up one week from the traditional "last Thursday of November." I was pretty sure I'd have the usual "four days off" for Thanksgiving, so by setting our wedding date for Thanksgiving Eve, November 20, 1940, it would be earlier in the month, and we thought we could have a four-day honeymoon.

We discussed our plans with Rev. Floyd B. LaFavre, the present pastor of the Bell Memorial Church where we'd met about five years earlier, and he assured us that he would be honored to perform the ceremony. Then, dear Florence Ratliff insisted that she would plan our reception for us, and wanted to have it at her home. We certainly appreciated her generous offer, since Lenore's mother was not living, and her older sister and brother-in-law, Alyce and Henry Yakel, and their two kids, were living some distance away, in Santa Maria. Too, by that time Lenore's "navy-wife" sister, Mildred, was living in Honolulu,



and Al, her brother, and his wife, Loraine, were living in El Centro, so we were really "on our own"!

Johnny Holmes agreed to be my "best man," and Lenore asked Pauline Self to be her matron-of-honor. We each invited four fellows and gals, who were very close friends of ours, to be our bridesmaids and groomsmen. Everything was going together beautifully!

Lenore had budgeted ten dollars for her wedding "trousseau" -- she hoped that would be enough, and she had always dreamed of making her own wedding gown. As I recall, she has told me that she had to pay fifty-cents a yard for the beautiful satin fabric, and that was very expensive in those days! The "netting" that she used for her veil was ten-cents a yard. Mrs. Fitzgerald, her landlady, was so enthusiastic about all of our planning that she had Mr. Fitzgerald move her own sewing machine into Lenore's rented bedroom for her use. Lenore bought her white satin wedding shoes at Leed's Shoe Store, a very popular shoe store chain at that time. She paid \$1.99 for them.

I watched the men's clothing store ads in the newspaper, and finally decided to look around at a store in downtown Los Angeles. We were both so pleased that I was able to get an all-wool, dark blue pin-strip, double-breasted suit -- brand new! -- for \$15.00! Today it would sell for at least a couple-hundred dollars! (That was my "good suit" for a long, long time!)

As our wedding date grew closer, we were both looking for an apartment that would be suitable, and within our price-range. Since my work was in southwest Inglewood and Lenore worked in Beverly Hills, we decided that somewhere halfway between would be a good location. I was sure I would be able to get a ride with someone, and Lenore would have to drive to the phone office because of working split-shift.

We had hoped to not have to pay more than twenty-five or thirty dollars a month, but that seemed impossible. Finally, Lenore "found" a duplex group on a quiet street in Culver City, and one was available. Problem: It was \$35.00 a month, but we went to look at it anyway.

The owner was very nice, and he showed us through. It looked wonderful to us! It was furnished very nicely, and was a comfortable size -- a nice living room, a good-size kitchen -- with a breakfast nook, one bedroom, the bathroom was clean and nice. There was even an extra bed -- a "pull-down" in the living room, and a little "service porch." There was a common driveway for the four units, and a row of garages was in the rear -- just alongside the clotheslines.

We were thrilled with the appearance and the availability, but we also knew that it was going to be hard to pay the \$35.00 each month, especially since we were still making payments on the car. Our combined salaries weren't all that great, but we were anxious to try to manage, so we told Mr. <sup>Jack</sup>Ferry that we'd like to put a deposit on it.

Knowing where we were going to live added to our excitement! Our very first address as "Mr. and Mrs." would be:

9015-B Hubbard Street, Culver City, California

(No "Zip Codes" in those days!)

That Wednesday morning, November 20, 1940, found me in Tonner Canyon, not far from the ranch where Lenore's dad lived. I had gone there to get decorations for the church (as I've already said, it was to be a "do it ourselves" affair!). I went there to cut small pepper tree branches, complete with their red berries, and anything else that I thought would look pretty for decorating a white garden arbor that Lenore was borrowing from some people in Los Angeles.

Florence Ratliff had loaned Lenore her car for the first part of that week so she'd have a way to transport her wedding gown, the flowers that she was going to use to make the "nosegays" for the bridesmaids to carry -- she knew where she could get a nice bunch of cut flowers for a dollar, and the "dismantled" arbor. (The family who'd promised to loan it to her tied it onto the top of Florence's car for her! No freeways<sup>?</sup> and freeway traffic in those days!)

So that she wouldn't be terribly late driving out to her dad's ranch, she'd managed to get a daytime shift on that Wednesday (instead of the 10-2, 6-10 split shift). But (there's another "but"!) along with all of her "cargo," Lenore brought some disappointing news: Just before she'd left the office her supervisor told her that she could only have Thanksgiving Day off because some of the operators who had more seniority wanted the full weekend off. There went our plans for a four-day honeymoon! She'd have to be back at her switchboard job at ten o'clock on Friday morning, and resume her regular split-shift hours!

That disappointment was overshadowed by our happiness. I'd gotten a couple fellows to help me, and when we'd finished the church looked beautiful! In addition to the trellis that was dripping with pepper tree branches, there was a tall basketful of white chrysanthemums on the platform. Dad Cain had given Lenore five dollars to use toward the wedding expenses, so Mrs. Didier, the florist in Puente, agreed to rent her the flower arrangement for the evening -- for five dollars!

One of my very real concerns was how to get my mother from Pasadena to Otterbein for the wedding, since she didn't drive, and because I needed to be out there all day. I was very grateful to Bob Wilhelmy, one of my groomsmen, when he offered to pick her up on his way from



where he lived in Eagle Rock. Bob wasn't going to be able to stay for the reception at Florence's, so Chet Handly said he'd be glad to drive her back to Pasadena for me. (That was just the beginning of various things regarding her well-being that would need to be rearranged -- after I was married and no longer living at home with Mother.)

Lenore's sister Alyce, her brother-in-law Henry, and their two kids, Carolyn and Lynn, surprised us by driving down from Santa Maria for our wedding. Alyce had been concerned that we might not have a wedding cake, so she'd baked and decorated one, and carried it all the way on her lap! (As it turned out, two ladies in the church had had the same concern, so they had worked together to bake and decorate a cake for us! Not many couples have two wedding cakes at their reception!)

During the afternoon, Johnny had followed me to Puente so I could "hide" our car in Mr. Tranbarger's garage -- the Tranbargers lived fairly close to Florence's house, then I went back to his home with him. That's where we both got dressed for the wedding, and he drove me to the church. (I don't remember for sure, but I have a feeling that we drove to the church in his same old top-down Model-T touring car; he'd never had enough extra money by then to buy a newer car.)

Lenore and her bridesmaids dressed at the church, in our old Sunday school classroom, and she was so happy that Alyce was there to assist in their make-shift dressing room.

As I rode with Johnny for that mile-and-a-half to the church, I wondered all the way, "Will there be anybody there?"

The church was packed! Well, there were at least a hundred people there, and that was a crowd in that little sanctuary!

Lenore was beautiful in her satin gown, carrying the white Bible

that had been Florence and Johnny's gift to her. And I felt very dressed-up in my new suit! When Pastor LaFavre got to the part about, ". . . my worldly goods, I thee endow," I patted my wallet in my hip pocket. The twenty-two dollars in it was, indeed, my "worldly goods."

There was a brief reception -- just for "Congratulations!" from all of those in attendance, and that "lineup" was in the old Christian Endeavor room behind the sanctuary -- the very room where we'd met each other about five and a-half years before.

After the wedding and the brief reception at the church, my "bride" and I rode with Melvin and Barbara to Florence's home for the "real" reception. (Melvin Blackwill and Barbara Hostetler had been married about a year before, and they had a <sup>nice Buick four door sedan.</sup> ~~"real" car -- four doors, nice upholstery and roll-down windows.~~ They were expecting their first child, so we had fun telling them that we'd have to "wait a while" before we could know if we'd had a ring bearer or flower girl in our wedding party. That was in the days before sonograms for expectant mothers! Oh, it was a boy.)

The reception was lovely! Just the way Florence always did things! Our friends who'd been in our wedding party were there, along with my mom, Lenore's dad, Alyce and Henry and their kids, and the ladies from the church who'd done so much to make it a memorable occasion for us. We were so glad that someone had a box camera, and someone else held a flash gun for it. Those few pictures are the only ones we've had!

Our "wedding trip" was all the way to Ontario (California, not Canada), where we stayed at the Yellow Shutter motel.

November 20, 1940, was our very special day!

## Starting Married Life

Our first day as Mr. and Mrs. was Thanksgiving Day! From Ontario, we drove to Florence's house in Puente to pick up the wedding gifts that we'd opened during the reception, the night before. Then we went to Mother's place on Los Robles Avenue, in Pasadena -- she'd asked us to stop by so she could give us her wedding gift for us -- a nice blanket. At last! we were on our way to Culver City, and to our "new home"! Lenore was anxious to prepare our first Thanksgiving Dinner.

We'd paid our first month's rent a few days before our wedding, so we could start lining kitchen drawers, putting away shower gifts, hang towels in the bathroom, and all of those "homemaking chores." So everything was all set for Lenore to "start cookin'." Or so we thought! She searched through every drawer in the kitchen -- no can opener! Tragedy! She needed to open a can of tomato soup for the meat loaf she was going to make. (I think she uses tomato sauce now, but back then it was tomato soup -- the way she'd learned to make it in Home Ec. at Brea-Olinda High School.) We couldn't believe that no one had given us a can opener for a shower gift! We had the rolling pin that Mr. Blackwill had given us -- he made a very special point of giving every newly married couple a rolling pin (and we still have ours!). But no can opener!

So . . . Bridegroom to the rescue!

I went to my tool box. I armed myself with a screwdriver and a hammer! I assured Lenore that opening the can would be no problem -- I just needed for her to grip it tightly on the kitchen counter. I



positioned the screwdriver next to the rim of the can, came down onto the screwdriver handle with a hefty blow with the hammer. I had no idea that tomato sauce could squirt and splatter like that! Lenore's pretty new pantsuit wasn't the same color as the tomato soup -- an oversight on her part -- and the splashes on the front of it didn't look very good.

We didn't know whether to laugh or cry (she probably did the latter, and I the former), but we did go ahead with opening the can, and cleaning up the mess. (I don't remember how the meat loaf tasted.)

Our first purchase as Mr. and Mrs. was a can opener!

Then came Friday, the day Lenore had to go back to work! I'd told my mother that I'd drop Lenore off at the phone company office, then drive up ~~the~~ Pasadena to do her yard work, take her to the store, or whatever else she needed for me to do. I knew I was going to be lonesome without Lenore, so I decided to do my "Pasadena thing" on that Friday, instead of waiting until Saturday (which became my weekly pattern).

So, just as we'd planned, that second day after our wedding, I dropped Lenore off at her office a few minutes before ten, and went on my way. She'd assured me that she'd find something to do there in Beverly Hills during her four-hour break in the afternoon, then I was to pick her up when she'd get off work at ten that night.

First the "no can opener" disaster, then this one: When she came storming out of the office a few minutes after ten that night, she was in tears again! She told me that when she'd walked into the switchboard room that morning the supervisor greeted her with, "Lenore, I've been trying to reach you by phone -- we've decided to let you have today off." There she was -- stranded! I was driving our car to Pasadena,

not to return until ten that night. There was nothing for her to do but put on her headset, climb onto her 'phone operator's stool, and start pushing and pulling switchboard plugs (with feeling, no doubt!).

Saturday must have been a more "normal" day, because I don't recall any disasters. Next would have been Sunday! We probably went to the beach -- even though it was November. That was always a favorite thing to do.

### **A Typical Week, Plus Christmas**

It didn't take long for us to realize that being married was no guarantee of "togetherness" -- not with Lenore working that split-shift schedule!

My ride stopped at the curb in front of our duplex around 7:15 in the morning. Even though she was still sleepy, Lenore got up early enough to fix our breakfast -- so we could have that one meal together. When we heard the horn honk, she'd hand me my lunch pail (she always packed my lunch for the next day after she got home from her six to ten p.m. shift), kiss me good-bye, and off I'd go.

While she was off work during the afternoon, she'd stop at the market for groceries (I still remember that we budgeted seven dollars a week for our groceries, and milk was delivered to our doorstep), pick up dry cleaning, or go to the washeteria (the early-days name for a laundromat) -- just any errands that needed to be taken care of.

I'd get home from work around 5:30, just in time to kiss Lenore hello and good-bye. She had to be ready to dash out the door to get the

car out of the back-of-the-lot garage, and tear up Robertson Boulevard to Beverly Hills for her six-to-ten evening shift.

I didn't like eating dinner alone, so I'd usually walk the short distance west to Ince Street, then go north about half-a-block to a little cafe that was across the street from the side entrance into the David O. Selznick movie studio. I could get the best plateful of hot beef sandwich and mashed potatoes -- covered with good brown gravy -- for forty-five cents, then a nickel for a cup of coffee (with free refills!). How could I beat that? And no dishes to wash! That became so routine for me that when they saw me coming, they'd start dishing it up. (Once in a while, when it was Lenore's day off, we'd splurge and go there together for our evening meal. What a treat that was!)

During the evenings, I would listen to the radio, play the guitar, or read. No TV to watch, and we didn't even have a record player when we were first married. Evenings were long, so I was really glad when I saw the headlights of our Pontiac coupe when Lenore pulled into the driveway, and headed to the little one-car garage, back by the clothesline. I'd hurry out the back door, kiss her "hello", and walk back into our little duplex together.

Next morning: same routine. Unless it was a Saturday. That was when we'd drive together as far as the phone office; I'd drop her off there, and go on to Pasadena -- to do my mother's yard work, and take her for errands.

Sundays were the days Lenore and I always looked forward to! Once in a while we'd drive out to the ranch to spend the day with her dad. Other times we'd go to the beach, or spend the day with Tom and Pauline.

Church-going was not a priority for us -- except on Mother's Day



and Easter. Those were the times that we'd make my mother happy by going to Pasadena together, and take her to church. (Regularly, friends stopped by to pick her up.) It would have made her happier if we'd gone to church on our own, but we just didn't want to ruin a "day off" by taking that much time away from our precious few hours together.

Christmas of 1940 was our very first one as Mr. and Mrs., but it was a workday for Lenore. Anyway, there wasn't really anything exciting for us to do since Alyce and Henry were still living in Santa Maria, and I've already mentioned that after my dad died my mother never did anything to make Christmas and birthdays special occasions. (It wasn't until some time later, after Alyce and Henry and their kids moved to Montebello, that we always had "family times" to look forward to.)

But we did the best we could to make our first Christmas a day to remember. Dad Cain came in from Brea to spend the afternoon with us -- during Lenore's hours off between shifts at the phone company. I don't remember for sure, but I imagine we rigged up a little Christmas tree, and I'm sure Lenore fixed a Christmas dinner for us (probably meatloaf again, since we had a canopener by that time!).

What I do remember for sure is that I'd gone Christmas shopping. I'd seen a beautiful white fur-cloth robe that I knew Lenore would love, but it was nine dollars, and I just didn't have that much to spend! I mustered up enough courage to mention it to Dad Cain, and he was more than ready to share the cost with me. He said he hadn't known what to get for her, and it sounded like something she'd enjoy having. We were two proud fellows when Lenore opened that gift! And, sure enough, she looked beautiful in it. We both remember that as being the outstanding thing about our first Christmas as husband and wife.

### Happy New Year (1941)!

We made all kinds of plans for celebrating our first New Year's Eve, but they got changed! We both had the flu! We felt so lousy that we'd actually "take inventory" to determine which one was feeling well enough to go to the kitchen to get the orange juice! Not only were we sick physically, but emotionally, too -- since we were both paid by the hour, we knew the longer we were off work, the smaller our pay checks would be! But we survived, and were soon back into our typical workweek routines.

Then, early in 1941, because of a job change for Henry, he and Alyce and their two kids moved from Santa Maria to Montebello. That was the beginning of many good times for us. We'd often go to their house Sunday afternoons, and sometimes Dad Cain would drive there from the ranch. Alyce was a wonderful cook, and loved preparing Sunday dinners -- and we loved eating them! Carolyn and Lynn were fun kids, and often we'd all wind up playing baseball in the vacant lot next door to their home. I couldn't believe how good it was to be part of a family.

I think it was in the spring of 1941 that we "went out on a limb": We went to Sears, Roebuck and Company (it went by the full name, back in those days) and bought a Silvertone (Sears' brand name for years) combination radio, record player and recorder! In no way did we have the money to pay cash for it, so we opened our first charge account -- probably the same Sears account that we've had through all of these

years of marriage! The price was thirty-five dollars, and we knew it would take a long time to pay it off, but we really felt it was going to be worth the sacrifice.

And I mean, it was deluxe! It was in a beautiful walnut cabinet -- a table model, with a hinged and bracketed lid which was designed to stay open when changing the 78 rpm, single-play records. There was a microphone which could be hand-held, or set on a table. It was wired, not a cordless mike (they hadn't been invented yet). There were two "heads," one for playing a record and the other for recording. The recording head used a sapphire "cutting" needle to record on a blank record by cutting the grooves into the surface of the blank record. (We became steady customers of Sears, Roebuck and Company since that's where we could buy the blank records!) One had to closely monitor the operation to brush away the "thread" that was produced by the cutting procedure. If allowed to build up, it would slow down the rotation of the record and cause audio distortion, and all kinds of other problems.

As can be imagined, by today's standards the fidelity was terrible, but we thought it was great, and it was such a new innovation that our friends were in awe!

The playing head was similar to that of any record player of its day -- it used a standard needle which became dull in practically no time at all, and had to be periodically replaced with a new one . And, as I've already mentioned, it only played 78 rpm pre-recorded records. Of course the real novelty was that we could record onto a blank record, then immediately play it back by switching over to the playing head.

We both enjoyed using it as a radio or record player, and I had fun recording my guitar playing and singing. Even though the fidelity wasn't the greatest, it sounded good to us!



Among the furnishings in our duplex, the living room had a sort of a low "accent table" (well, that's what Lenore always called it!) that was just the right size for the table-model record player. It made such an ideal spot for it that when it was time for us to move, later on, we bought the table from Mr. Ferry, the landlord, and moved it along with us for a bunch of years.

We don't still have that table, but our Silvertone radio/recorder is stashed away somewhere, along with a few old 78 rpm records.

Sentimental? Well, maybe!

Our next purchase wasn't as expensive, but sure did furnish us with years of pleasure! A little black and white, mixed-breed terrier puppy.

I don't remember for sure, but I think it was one of the guys at work who told a bunch of us that his dog had just had a litter of pups, and that they'd be selling them as soon as they were old enough. For some reason that sounded very interesting! I'd always had a dog when I was a boy, and I was pretty sure Lenore would enjoy one, too. I'll admit that I hadn't thought through about the fact that it would have to be home alone while we were both at work, and house-breaking it wouldn't be an easy job -- for that same reason. But, I couldn't resist! I asked the guy how much they would be asking for the pups, and it was just a dollar, or two. Whatever, I decided we could handle it.

I wanted to surprise Lenore, so I planned my strategy for her day off -- when the car would be at home. When I got home from work that day, I told her I needed to take care of an errand. My first stop was the market -- to get an empty carton of some kind, so I'd have something to carry the little dog home in. I had my pick of the litter, so of course I chose the one that I thought was the cutest.

Lenore was thrilled when I walked in with our new "family member," and that was a relief to me. I'd not happened to think ahead to what Plan #2 would have been -- if she hadn't liked him!

When I lifted him out of the big box, we then noticed that it was a potato chip carton. That did it! It was at the time the book "Good-bye, Mr. Chips" had been made into a very popular movie, so our little black-and-white, mixed-breed terrier puppy was named Mr. Chips ("Chips," for short). He was such a nice pet -- he was very adaptable, he enjoyed riding in the car, so we took him with us almost everywhere we went. We really enjoyed him for the eleven, or so, years we had him.

### **Trial and Error**

We kept on keeping on, but we were both getting tired of Lenore's work schedule. In fact, she and I both were wishing that she could be a "full-time homemaker," but we couldn't figure out any way for that.

Then, one Saturday in the summer of 1941 when I was at my mother's in Pasadena, she told me that her rental property on Mar Vista Avenue was going to be vacated soon. She realized "it was making a lot of extra driving for me" to have to go up to her place every week, so "she'd like to offer a solution." Why I fell for the scheme, I'll never know! But at the time it looked like a way for us to get by on one pay check. Mother offered the house to us -- rent-free!

When I told Lenore about the proposal, she wasn't thrilled about living that close to my Mother, but she, too, decided that it might be a way that she could quit work and be at home all of the time. The idea

of having a "real" house with a yard was certainly an attractive offer! Lenore wanted to try hard at making my mother happy, so she said being able to drive her for her errands might be a way to draw closer to her.

It was probably sometime in July or August of 1941 that we told Mr. Ferry of our plans, and began getting ready for our first "major move." As we look back on it, we realize it was a comparatively simple move -- since we didn't have hardly any furniture. Lenore's dad had given her the sewing machine that had been her mother's, we had our record player, and that was when we arranged to buy the "accent table" we kept it on. So those were about our only large items.

But we did have unbelievable stacks of boxes of clothes, dishes, pots and pans, bed linens, and all of that kind of stuff. It was much more than we could pile into our Pontiac coupe, or at least it would have required countless trips from Culver City to Pasadena.

Idea! We lived in the 9015-B duplex, and the guy who lived at 9015-A worked for Pepsi Cola, and he drove a Pepsi Cola delivery truck! Yes, he'd be glad to help us out!

Next, we recruited Rollie and Inez Ashcraft, shirt-tail relatives of Lenore's, but also our very close friends -- almost like "second parents" to us. They were almost always available for anything!

So, on the designated Saturday, we all pitched in!

New address: 815 North Mar Vista Avenue, Pasadena, California -- right back where I'd been so many years before, while my dad was still living, and before my folks had had the Holliston Avenue house built.

But this was different: I was there with my wife! And it didn't take long to see that the "balancing act" wasn't going to be a breeze!

Lenore enjoyed making new curtains for the kitchen and the bedroom,



and doing other "housewifely things," but my mother didn't enjoy the changes from the way she'd fixed the house -- how many years ago?

When I got in touch with "George," the man I'd ridden to work with before I was married, I found out that he had a car load and couldn't take another rider. So, the only way I could get a ride to my work in Inglewood was to go into a carpool. That arrangement meant that I had to drive every fourth week, which left Lenore without a car, and that meant there was no way that she could drive Mother for her errands during that week.

Then there was the subject of church to deal with! "Now that you are right here in Pasadena, we can all go to church together." Or, "Where were you last night? I tried to phone you, but you weren't home." It was hard! We knew Mother was lonely, but we didn't know how to handle the situation.

I was beginning to understand the reasoning behind her generous offer, but, all in all, it wasn't proving to be a good plan!

After just a few months, I'd had it! One day, from my work there in the Inglewood area, I called our previous landlord Jack Ferry. When I asked if he had any vacancies, he said not just then, but the back duplex, 9015-C, would be available after the first of the year (1942). He promised to hold it for us. When I got back to Pasadena that evening, and told Lenore, she cried with relief.

Of course, Mother was upset with our decision. She said that she had hoped we could all work together at making it a happy arrangement. I blew my stack! I reminded her that ever since Lenore and I had been married, I'd still gone up to her place almost every Saturday to do her yard work, take her shopping, or whatever she needed, but as much as I

was concerned for well-being, she was not my main concern, that I was now a married man and I strongly resented her attempts to bring me back under her wing. Needless to say, things got pretty chilly for a while, but gradually they thawed out.

Just as soon as we heard from Mr. Ferry, we moved back to Culver City -- into the duplex directly behind the one that we had occupied before. I don't remember what we did about a truck, but I'm sure Rollie and Inez were there to help us!

Oh, how good it was to be back! Just Lenore and me, and Chips. And we were going to try to make it on just one salary. Circumstances were changing, and all of the shifts at North American Aviation were working more overtime.

Indeed, many things were changing -- radically!

**PART ~~EIGHT~~: RADICAL CHANGES**

**1941 - 1944**

**Chapter ~~34~~ 35**

**World War II**

The radical changes of 1942 had their beginning at the end of 1941 -- December 7, 1941, to be exact! That was when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor!

The United States had hoped to stay out of the war that was already raging in Europe, but "Pearl Harbor" shattered that "hope." Quoting from WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA (page 8876, of our very old edition), "The twenty years between the time the Versailles Treaty was signed on June 28, 1919, and the time Germany invaded Poland in September, 1939, were more like an armed truce than a period of peace. . . . World War II was fought on every continent and every ocean. Most of the peoples of the earth took part in it. . . ."

The United States was on guard; military strategies and strengths were being increased -- just in case. Actually, as early as 1938 Congress had authorized huge expenditures for the building up of both the Army and the Navy, and the expansion was speeded up when war broke out in Europe in 1939. On July 10, 1940, Congress approved unprecedented sums for defense purposes, and by the end of that year additional amounts were approved.

In the summer of 1940, General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, insisted that additional manpower would be needed for adequate



defense, and that could not be realized without an army raised by conscription, or draft. The Selective Training and Service Act became law on September 16, 1940, and never before had Congress drafted soldiers in the time of peace. More than half a million men had been drafted by July, 1940, and that number was doubled by January 1, 1942.

Quoting again from WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA, "Congress followed three principles in drafting men. First, military service should be compulsory for all able-bodied men except conscientious objectors, who should be given noncombatant duties. Second, certain skilled workers should be deferred from military service because of the nature of their work. Third, men in the armed forces should get their [civilian] jobs back at the end of their service."

All of those premonitions proved to be timely because, again from the encyclopedia, "About the middle of the month (November, 1941) a large fleet of aircraft carriers, battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines left Japanese ports on a highly secret mission. Their secret became known to the world at 7:55 a.m., Sunday, December 7, 1941, when more than 100 Japanese fighting planes, torpedo bombers, and dive bombers appeared over Hawaii. They attacked Pearl Harbor, the United States' largest naval base in the Pacific . . . ."

The United States declared war on Japan that day -- "the day of infamy," as it was later referred to by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was a chain reaction (back to the WORLD BOOK): "Great Britain declared war on Japan on December 8. Three days later, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States, and Congress retaliated with declarations of war against Germany and Italy." It was Hitler's Germany and their Axis nations against the Allied nations which had struggled so long in their resistance of Communism.

I doubt if there are any living persons who were alive at that time, either as children or adults, who don't still remember what they were doing when they first heard that radio news broadcast: "Japan has attacked Pearl Harbor!" Instantly everyone pondered, "How is this going to affect my family and me?"

There was no pretending that "this isn't really happening." Almost immediately barrage balloons were installed all along the coast -- from Baja California to Canada -- and perhaps beyond. Blackouts were imposed at the slightest provocation. The drafting of "able-bodied men" escalated remarkably -- in fact, it soon became difficult to find enough skilled workers to fill all of the jobs opened by the increases in the production of military equipment: planes, ships, submarines, vehicles, and on, and on.

Because of the overwhelming demand for various commodities needed for military purposes, rationing for civilian uses became essential. Rubber had to be conserved, so tires became scarce. Then metals used for automobiles, refrigerators, etc., were diverted for military manufacturing, and the plants where such items were produced had to be converted into factories that could turn out products needed by the military.

Staple foods such as sugar and coffee were in short quantities because of shipping and importing limitations. Meats, and other foods, were in shortage because of the amounts required for feeding the military personnel.

And gasoline for personal automobiles -- forget it! Rationing coupons were issued, carpools for work transportation were mandatory, gasoline for pleasure driving was practically unavailable.

Public transportation -- by bus, train, or plane, was limited because almost every seat, and even "standing room," was needed for transporting troops and government officials.

Our North American Aviation plant was completely covered with camouflage netting, and so were all of the other similar corporations.

I well-remember one night when a blackout was imposed because *ALLEGEDLY* "unidentified planes were seen in the area." Search lights were criss-crossing the night sky, and suddenly there was the sound of anti-aircraft guns from various locations. Since where we lived in Culver City wasn't far from the coastline, we could see the streaks of tracer bullets! That was frightening! But it was never confirmed that enemy aircraft had indeed invaded our coastal airspace -- but it made for an exciting night! As far as I can recall, that was the only time that such a thing occurred in the United States during the war.

*Nothing ever  
proven*

Everything was accelerated at work. Within engineering some departments were working 60-hour weeks! Everyone was enthusiastically behind the "war effort," not only because of increased earnings, but genuine patriotism was demonstrated on every hand.

For some time I had been involved in the development of the X-73, a sleek fighter plane that was already breaking speed records at Muroc, a flight testing sight near Barstow. Because of the "X"- ("experimental") rating, the records were not made official, but we knew (and so did the Air Force!) that it was the fastest fighter plane in the air at that time. Upon certification, the "X-73" designation was changed to "P-51" -- the "Mustang."

*Propeller driven  
prior to  
jets*

North American Aviation was obtaining more contracts and bid offers than the small company could handle in that one plant. The decision to



expand was inevitable. Two new plants were leased from the government -- one was in Kansas City, where the B-25 bomber would be built; the other location was to be in Grand Prairie, Texas -- just a few miles west of Dallas. The AT-6, an advanced trainer plane, was to be built there. (As it turned out, so many of those planes were produced, even early in the war years, that it was nicknamed "The Texan.")

The P-51 "Mustang" and the AT-6 "Texan" were also being built in the Inglewood plant. The B-24 "Liberator," a huge 4-engine bomber, was also destined to be manufactured at the new Texas facility. The B-24 was a Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation plane, and was under construction at the Consolidated home plant in San Diego, as well as its huge plant in Fort Worth, Texas. And, before long, the Ford Motor Company in Willow Run, Michigan, was converted for manufacturing the B-24s.

Work was mounting! Men were being drafted for military service, leaving huge gaps in the demand for "experienced" workers. North American Aviation's production lines were strained even further when a contract for 2,500 B-24s was issued to them, and that contract included tentative proposals for major design changes for the "J" and the "L" series.

But I'm getting too far ahead of myself!

I loved the work -- even the pressure, and was quite satisfied with the way things had worked out for Lenore and me now that we were back in Culver City; everything seemed to be going smoothly. But ("but" again!) back at the home plant in Inglewood, there were lots of rumors flying around.

One morning I got a call I'll never forget. I was told to be in Red Hansen's office at a certain time that morning. (Carl J. "Red" Hansen was a company vice president in charge of engineering.)

Wow! This was worse than going to the "Lion's Den" back in my Longfellow school days!

The time came, and I went to Red's office. We "small-talked" for a few minutes, then he got into the reason for the meeting. He told me about the company's intention to open plants in Kansas City and Dallas, and that I was being considered, along with several others, to fill the supervisory positions that would be required for those new facilities.

I was not asked for an answer at that time, but Red told me to talk it over at home, then be ready to give him my answer within the next few days. When I asked where I would be going, he said it would be to the Dallas plant, and that we would be leaving Inglewood around the first of June.

It sounded exciting to me, but I didn't know how Lenore would react to that which would be a radical change for us. I was relieved when it turned out that she was as excited as I was! For a couple of newly married kids, it sounded like a big adventure! (And that's what it proved to be!)

I didn't wait long -- I think it was probably the very next morning when I called Red's office to give him my affirmative answer. Lenore and I were ready to start packing!

Several days went by that I heard no more about it. I was beginning to wonder what was going on that I didn't know anything about. But finally one day a "MEMO" listing all of the detailed particulars came to me through the company mail. The company would ship our

household items, clothing and furniture (by then we'd added a coffee table to our possessions!), and we would be given \$500.00 for our traveling expenses. (We'd never before had \$500.00 all at once!) The "transplanted personnel" was to meet on a certain date in the middle of June, at a specified time, in the lobby of the Baker Hotel, in Dallas, Texas! I could hardly wait to go home from work that night so I could tell Lenore! We were so excited!

Giving notice to Jack Ferry, our landlord, was easy. Telling my mother was a different story! I gave much thought to how I would ease into the subject when I'd be going to her place in Pasadena on the next Saturday.

Sure enough, just as I'd thought, she was quite upset over the whole thing. I explained to her that it was to be a temporary situation, that it would probably not last more than two or three years at the most, and I assured her that we would be returning to California. She finally resigned herself to it -- not happily, but of necessity.

As always, Lenore's dad was more understanding. We knew he was going to miss having us around, but he was one who could also remember some of the adventures he'd enjoyed in his younger years. We knew we'd really miss being able to go out to the ranch whenever we wanted to.

There was one very important thing that we knew we'd have to take care of before making that drive to Texas, and eventually the return trip, and that was going to be a major bit of business. Our faithful old Pontiac was getting a lot of miles on it, and we knew it wouldn't be wise to start out with it. Then, too, it was going to become more difficult to find a reliable used car since production of new cars had been curtailed by the government.



I'd always been interested in looking over new cars when they came out each year, and I had really liked the looks of the 1941 two-door Chevy coupes. I kept looking until I found just what I was looking for! It fit that description, the color was creamy-white, it was immaculate inside and out, with about 20,000 miles on it. It was a "Special Deluxe" model, which gave us a few more goodies than a "Standard" model. As I recall, it was priced at around \$995.00, and we were able to turn in the Pontiac for the down payment. It was the nearest thing to a new car that we had ever had, and we were really proud of that car!

I took a picture of Lenore sitting on the front fender -- she looked so beautiful (and so did the car -- what could be seen of it!). I carried that picture in my billfold for years, and still have it put away somewhere.

We were concerned about Chips, our little dog. We didn't think we should try to take him with us in the car -- we didn't know just how long it would take us to drive to Dallas, and we didn't know where we'd live after we got there. We had been told that housing was scarce, and that we might have to stay in a motel for a while. We decided to talk that over with Dad Cain. Sure enough, he was very willing to keep Chips for us, and said when we let him know it would be all right, he would ship him to us by train.

That just about took care of our pre-planning, so we were anxious for the time to leave on our adventure!

It was interesting to find out who all would be going to the new plants. The Kansas City plant had already started operation with the B-25 sub-assembly parts, and it wouldn't be long until a final assembly

line would be started. It was of special interest to us to learn that Tom Self, one of my groomsmen and the husband of Lenore's matron of honor, Pauline, would be going to Kansas City. That gave the two couples of us a lot to talk about -- they were as anxious as we were! Then, I knew a large percentage of the ones who'd be going to Dallas, and we were all excited about the prospects.

We were finally told when to have our things ready for shipping, and that they'd be picked up by the van line that was to do the moving for the company employees. No Pepsi Cola truck for that move! Our possessions were going in style!

What was used  
to move to one of  
Mom's  
RESIDENCES  
in BOSTON

Then the time for good-byes finally came. Alyce and Henry had a farewell dinner for us, and my mother was there, too. We stayed at the ranch with Dad Cain our last night, then the next morning, on a day in early June, 1942, we said good-bye to him and to Chips, headed out through Brea Canyon in our "new" Chevy coupe, and were on our way to Texas!

## Chapter ~~40~~ 36

### The Texas Years

#### Our Route 66 Adventure

We'd only heard about "Route 66," but it wasn't as famous then as it became many years later. Back then it was just the way to go, but through the years a very popular song was written about it, a television series was based on it, and now it's even recorded in the "Historical Highways" books and documents. For the two of us, it was to be a big adventure -- especially since we'd not been farther east than Ontario and Mt. Baldy together.

Lenore had written to her Aunt Jutie who lived in Tucumcari, New Mexico, and told her that we'd like to visit with her -- if that would be all right. (Jutie Horn was Lenore's mother's sister, and she lived with her daughter and son-in-law, Minnie and Clay Fausnacht.) She'd received a letter almost by return mail, and Aunt Jutie assured us that they'd be very happy to see us, and that we should plan to stay with them for a while. We couldn't let them know exactly which day we'd be arriving, but they'd said we'd be welcome "any time."

As I recall, we drove as far as Williams, Arizona, the first night. What I do remember for sure is that we stayed in Gallup, New Mexico, the second night out. It was after dark when we got there, so we stopped at about the first motel we came to. The man at the desk told us where we could find a restaurant for our supper, so we didn't even check out our room until after we'd returned from eating. The room was fine, but what



we didn't know was that the motel was just across the highway from the railroad yards, and freight train switching went on all night! Complete with bells clanging, whistles blowing, and wheels screeching on the tracks! Since that, every time we've driven through Gallup, New Mexico, we've laughed about our first and last! "overnight experience" there.

Then, the next afternoon we arrived at Aunt Jutie's home, in Tucumcari! That was a wonderful time for us -- the family was so cordial (and the home-cooked food was so good!). They understood how anxious we were to get on our way to Dallas the next day, so we only stayed with them for the one night. But they made us promise to stop in again -- when the time would come for us to return to California.

After breakfast the next morning, we started out again. We could hardly believe that we'd soon be in Texas! Just a few miles east of Tucumcari we left Route 66, and started southeast on some smaller, less-traveled highways. We went through Amarillo, Texas, then got onto Highway 287 which took us down through Wichita Falls and Fort Worth. That was long before the complicated freeway which now circles Fort Worth, so we didn't have any trouble in finding where we were supposed to turn east for the twenty- or twenty-five mile drive to Dallas! That stretch of highway took us right through Grand Prairie and near the large plant where I'd be reporting for work on Monday morning.

We finally arrived in beautiful, hot, humid Dallas, complete with fireflies! It was late, and we were bushed. We found a nice-looking motel, "The Blue Roof" -- it sounds like a honky-tonk, but it was really very nice, so we took a room for the night, thinking that after a good-night's rest we'd go find us a place to live.

That's what we planned to do! We didn't know it was true that

there weren't any places available -- at least not any for a rental fee that we could afford to pay! (During the war years, almost all major cities and towns were unusually crowded with military families and defense plant workers' families.) So, it was back to The Blue Roof for -- well, we didn't know for just how long!

On the pre-arranged date, and at the designated time, I met together with the other "California transplants" in the lobby of the Baker Hotel in downtown Dallas. After a lot of chit-chat about our trips, each with his own story to tell, we got down to business. You might say we held our first "staff meeting."

*make* → Hollis "Holly" Smith was introduced as the General Manager of the newly-formed Master Lines division within the Engineering Department. The other five of us had been selected to supervise different phases of the work. I was given the responsibility for the fuselage of the B-24, and that turned out to be a monumental task. I wish I had known the Lord then, for it was certainly an assignment to have been prayed about! I know I left that meeting excited, but scared! I think everyone else was too, including Holly Smith.

The following Monday was our first day of work in our new roles, and it was a day of confusion if there ever was one! When I look back on those two years, the whole scenario is overshadowed with WORK! and very little time for play. But there will be more about that later.

### Our Texas Home

Lenore's work was cut out for her, too! We still didn't have an apartment, so while I was at work, she was "cruising the streets," looking for a "For Rent" sign! It was a discouraging assignment, but she kept looking. Finally, one day she drove out east on Vickery Boulevard, a few blocks east of Greenville Avenue, up in northeast Dallas. She saw what looked like a painter's truck parked in the driveway of a nice little house. When she got up to the front door, she saw that it was really a duplex with the second "front door" on the side by the driveway.

Sure enough, a couple men were inside painting. She asked if the place would be for rent, and they said they thought so, and gave her the name and phone number of the owner. She went back down to Greenville Avenue, found a pay phone in a drug store, and called the number. "Yes, it would be for rent in another day, or so, just as soon as the painters were finished. The rent would be \$45.00. Yes, it's furnished. Yes, it will be all right for you to have a small dog there." She told me later that she almost shouted, "We'll take it!"

She was concerned about what I might think about the ten dollars more than we'd been paying in Culver City, but she also knew that I was well aware of the difficulty we were having in finding any place to live. So, when the owner told her that if she was interested, he'd meet her at the place "in about fifteen minutes." She hurried back there, and by the time he arrived she was ready to write him a check for the first month's rent. Then, back to the pay phone in the drug store --



she called the van and storage company and told them the address where our few possessions could be delivered, and on just which date.

Lenore could hardly wait until I got to The Blue Roof after work that evening! Even though we knew we wouldn't be able to see inside, we drove out there so she could show me the location, and the outside. It was quite a ways from the plant location in Grand Prairie, but I was hopeful of getting into a carpool for the commute.

At last! We had an address that we could send "to the folks back home": 5906 Vickery Blvd., Dallas, Texas. No zip code and no phone number -- it was a long wait for new subscribers to get residential telephone service during the war years, and zip codes hadn't been "invented" yet. We were really anxious to send that address to Dad Cain -- so he could let us know when he'd be putting Chips into the crate he'd told us he'd built for him, and take him to Fullerton to put him on the train for the trip to Texas! We surely were missing Mr. Chips!

It was a very nice duplex -- much larger than the place in Culver City. The living room was large, nicely furnished, drapes and pretty, plain maroon carpeting which we were forever vacuuming! (Yes, the vacuum cleaner was part of the furnishings.) There was a full-size dining room with a walnut dining table and chairs, and a matching "side board." The kitchen and the bedroom were very large, and the bathroom was nice -- white and black tile, and that seemed luxurious to us. To go out the back door to the driveway that led to the garage on the back of the lot, you'd go through a little screened-in porch. That's where we ate our meals during the hot summertime. Air-conditioning? What's that? Just water bugs, centipedes, and small scorpions were the amenities. That was Texas, y-all!

### Our Texas Friends

We were young -- I was not quite twenty-four and Lenore had just had her twenty-second birthday in March -- a few months before we'd left California. We didn't want to admit it, but we were homesick and lonesome! We were desperate for friends, and it didn't take very long to realize that a lot of other people were, too.

With very few exceptions, almost all of the couples we met were there because of war-time assignments, just like we were. We had all left long-time friends and family behind, so everyone worked hard at making new friends. So, before I get into a lot of detail about my experiences as a brand new supervisor (a scary thought, even now!), I want to tell about some of those people -- our "support group." Our time in Texas was made more bearable because of those new friends.

If we hadn't gone to Texas, we'd probably never have gotten acquainted with Bob and Dorothy Kemp -- "California transplants," just like we were. Bob was an engineering supervisor, too. I don't remember how long he had been with North American before being transferred to Dallas, but our paths had never crossed at the Inglewood plant. Since Tom and Pauline Self had gone to Kansas City instead of Dallas, we really needed Bob and Dorothy! They had enough money to buy a little home, and they wound up in Oak Cliff, closer to the plant. Even though it was a distance from where we lived, we were in each other's homes very often, and our friendship with them was very close for many years, even after we'd all returned to California.

When we first moved into the place on Vickery Boulevard, Bob and Marie Berger lived in a little house on the back of the lot, back by the garage. They were a few years older than we were; he played first violin in the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and was their substitute concert master. Bob Berger had some kind of minor health problems and that meant he was a "4-F" as far as the military draft was concerned -- otherwise, he'd have been in the army, or in defense work. As the war ground on, only men above a certain age, or those with some disability, or those in some defense-related work were exempt from military service.

Bergers were very friendly, but we didn't have time to get very well acquainted with them -- they were expecting their first baby, and wanted to move to a larger place. They found a nice house over by White Rock Lake just a short time after we'd moved into "our half" of the front duplex, so, like I've already said, they weren't there very long.

We wondered who'd move in next! Well, it was the Bone trio -- Mr. and Mrs. Bone, and Mr. Bone's "old maid sister." Anyone over 35 was old to us, back in those days, and the Bones were probably at least fifty-five or sixty! They were very nice to us, and they really enjoyed Chips. But they weren't there very long, either -- they moved to another town in Texas -- "back home," they said. Who'd be next?

Chet and Myrna Harrison, and their little two-year old Valerie. They were "transplants" from Wisconsin -- Chet was a sanitation engineer for the United States government, so he was stationed in Dallas for a "home base," and had to travel to various military bases for his work as an inspector and advisor. That meant that Myrna and Valerie were home



alone a lot of the time, so she and Lenore became very good friends. When Chet could be at home for a weekend, now and then, I got well acquainted with him, and we all loved Valerie! (It was a future event for them, but I'll mention now that John Chester "Little Chet" was born while they lived in there. Their third child, Vickie, wasn't born until quite some time later -- after the war years, and after they'd moved back to their home in Wisconsin.)

Through Lenore and me, the Harrisons and the Kems became good friends, too, and the three couples of us enjoyed many good times together. Of course, Valerie, Chips and Kems' little dog (I don't remember his name) were always included.

It was a young couple next door to us, in the next house east -- not the other side of our duplex, who were "real Texans," and we had some good times with them. They were R.M. and Julia Roberts. (He always went by R.M., we never did know if he had a real name.) Julia's mother had passed away some time before we'd gotten acquainted with them, but her father, Mr. Fitzgerald, and Junior, her about-ten-year-old brother, lived there with them. They were such a nice, congenial family, a real example of "Texas charm," and we really admired and appreciated them. We thought it was so nice when, quite often, Junior would come knock on our front door, and in his quiet, soft-spoken way, he would ask, "Mr. (or Mrs.) Honline, could I 'borrow' Chips for a while? I'd like to take him over to my house to play."

I suppose I should mention the people who lived in the "other half" of the duplex -- the Tidwell ladies: a mother, and her daughter who was

probably about Lenore's age. We were never very popular with them, I'm sorry to say. Laura Jane, the daughter, was an aspiring opera singer, and her mother came across as her self-appointed manager, promoter, and fan club, all in one. I mean, they really considered themselves to be high class! Maybe they were, it was just that Lenore and I weren't really "into opera." And Chips didn't make points when he'd sit in the hallway that separated the two units and howl -- while Laura Jane was practicing her arias over in their side of the building. (We don't think they ever caught on to the fact that we'd "inspired" him to do that by pantomiming a "howl now" facial expression! Unfortunately, Chips didn't need our prompting for very long and we had to begin scolding him to get him to stop!)

Through acquaintances that I made at work, we had several other friends that we'd be with occasionally, but the Kemps and the Harrisons are the ones we've stayed in touch with through these many years since having gone to Dallas because of my work, the reason for our "Texas years." Now it's time to get back to that subject.

Chapter 37

A Lot of Work . . . And a Little Play

My first day of working as a brand new supervisor with a brand new group of people in a brand new facility could be captioned

CONFUSION MONDAY!

North American Aviation's new facility in Grand Prairie, Texas (about five miles west of Dallas), was actually two plants: Plant "A", and Plant "B". The "A" plant had been in existence for some time, I'm not sure how long, but the "B" plant was new -- and not quite finished when the "California transplants" arrived on the scene. It was to be considerably larger than the "A" building, and it was to be used solely for the production of the big B-24 bomber.

The "A" plant, which was already being used, was for the production of the AT-6, and the pride of North American, the P-51 fighter plane.

Even though the "B" plant was not yet completed, the part of the building for the office areas, including engineering and related departments, were nearly finished, and were already in use. It was the portion of the building that would house the actual assembly lines that was still under construction.

When those of us from California arrived there, the employees who were already working there were local Texas people. They had already established functioning departments, and were well "under way," especially in the "A" plant.

The "B" plant was a considerably different situation from the "A" plant. I believe that I've already mentioned that the B-24 was already



under construction at Consolidated's huge plants in San Diego and Fort Worth, as well as the Ford Motor Co., in Willow Run, Michigan.

North American's production contract with the Army Air Corp (no separate Air Corp divisions -- Army, Navy, etc., until quite some time after World War II, it was "Army Air Corp" at first) was to produce approximately 2,500 B-24s with specified modifications to certain models. Pursuant to contract specs ("specifications"), North American was to complete engineering data covering the aircraft and, specifically, the areas of modifications. This meant there'd need to be a complete set of engineering drawings, specs, technical data, etc. -- the whole "ball of wax."

The preceding has been background; now, back to the story: A "real live" B-24 had been flown over from Consolidated in Fort Worth to the North American Grand Prairie plant. In addition to the plane, a complete set of their drawings, specs, etc., had been brought along. Also, N.A.A. had received a complete data package -- prints, etc., from Ford. I never could understand the reason for all of that data being sent, since our drawings and spec formats were totally different from either of the other two company's. To me it only produced a confusion factor. It resulted in the drawings, in fact, all of the paperwork from those companies being stacked away in files which were accessible to anyone who wanted to use them. (I don't believe I ever saw anyone do so; I know I never did.)

"Confusion Monday," started off with a long indoctrination which included a "hands on" inspection of the B-24. That session was conducted by some guy from Consolidated who sure knew the airplane, and I secretly wondered if I would ever become as knowledgeable.

After that we went to our assigned department areas to meet our personnel. Our groups were not totally filled, in fact the ones who were there were only representative, or a nucleus, of the eventual group. As I recall now, I started out with about twenty who had been assigned to the "fuselage group," and it eventually expanded into a staff of around sixty. None of that initial bunch had been there very long -- they'd been hired about two weeks previous to the arrival of "their supervisor, who'd be coming from the California plant." But they had used the time well by familiarizing themselves with the aircraft, and learning as much as they could from Consolidated's drawings.

Of my group, about one-third were women; among the men, there were only three or four who had had any drafting experience -- or anything that was related to drafting. One of the men was pitifully crippled from arthritis; several had previously worked in filling stations and other non-technical jobs; I estimated the average age of the group was about five years older than I. (As they looked me over, I was wondering if they were thinking, "This kid is our new supervisor?") B. 1224

As seriously as was possible, we held our first group meeting in a makeshift conference room. In turn, they each gave his or her name, and told a little about themselves. It was just a time to get acquainted -- and for me to try to evaluate what I had to work with. Oh me!

The production department had already worked up scheduling charts in preparation for that "time of beginning": there were tentative time allotments for various ledger accounts. The what we called "time flow" and "man allotment charts" had to be gone over and either accepted or changed to conform to your group's capabilities. Wow!

As soon as possible, Holly Smith called a staff meeting to talk over man power, etc. It was immediately obvious that we all had people who were eager to work, but did not have the skills necessary to do the job! It was somewhat consoling to find that I wasn't alone -- it seemed to be a universal problem throughout the engineering department. It was obvious that some kind of a training program was going to be mandatory!

There were no existing programs for the new personnel to be enrolled in. Who'd do the teaching? Where could such classes be held? A critical assignment for "top management"!

### **New Supervisor/Teacher!**

Talk about "practical experience"! When approached with the problem, Southern Methodist University (SMU), there in Dallas, agreed to cooperate in the interest of the urgent need for the nation's defense program. Several classrooms were designated as ones which could be used for night classes for the new hires.

Teaching staff? Easy. Each supervisor was "enlisted" for teaching a class on a subject related to the work being done in his department. (My anxieties were mounting!)

Smitty coordinated the effort so that we wouldn't all be teaching the same thing. Also, it was planned so an employee did not have to go to the class being taught by his supervisor. To get around that, a list of the subjects being offered was printed and circulated throughout the department, then each person, knowing his/her own needs, could choose for himself. It was structured so that after six weeks the students would be rotated, and the classes would start over.



I elected to teach Descriptive Geometry, the subject which is the basis for all engineering drawings and layouts, and the subject which I'd thoroughly enjoyed when I was a student at Pasadena Junior College, only about four years earlier. I had no trouble in selecting the textbook which would be used for the class I was to teach -- the same text that I'd learned from myself, the one authored by Dr. M.O. Warner.

I really enjoyed the teaching but I, like all the other guys that were involved in the program, found myself really pressed for time. After working a full day, it was off to SMU for the night classes (I don't remember if it was two or three nights a week), then the students' papers had to be gone over and grades tallied at the end of each six-week period. (That grading reflected on the proficiency of the teacher, and had a strong bearing on the employee's financial progress -- when

*progress* -- review-time rolled around.)

Meantime, proportionate to increases in work schedule demands, personnel was steadily being added to each department at work, and it wasn't long until my work crew had not only increased in numbers but also in age. With the drafting of the younger, able-bodied men for military service, I found myself both supervising and teaching some men and women who were nearly twice my age. I often wondered what they must have been thinking. I tried hard to not act like a "know it all," for I certainly didn't feel like one. Truthfully, I was "running scared"!

After the first six-week class period, we took a week off before starting the next session. It was helpful that the textbook provided tests so that the student could test his own progress (if he was diligently studying on his own). Those textbook tests were also a big help to me, the teacher, as I prepared "final exams" pertinent to the

material that had been covered during the previous six weeks. It was a time for "self-testing" myself, too; each go-around I was a little bit less nervous in conducting the next six-week session.

### **Meanwhile, Back at Work . . .**

Almost every day the Personnel office would send in new people for the supervisors to interview. We would occasionally get someone who had had working experience in the engineering departments of other aircraft companies, and boy! were we ever glad to welcome them! That's how I got Woody Atherton, a former engineering supervisor with Chance Vought Aircraft Corp. Woody eventually became my assistant, and I was surely glad to have him on board.

Our first few planes were being built using Consolidated's drawings and tooling. We were working hard at engineering support of "on line" (that is, assembly line) structural modifications in accordance with Air Force contract specifications.

Inspection (department) personnel were about to lose their minds, for those were N.A.A. inspectors who were having to work to Consolidated or, in some cases, Ford's drawings. Rejections and hot arguments were frequent, yet, gradually things were picking up speed. The fifty to sixty hours a week that we were working resulted in our beginning to meet -- or even exceed -- schedules, and I was beginning to feel good about the whole thing. I wasn't scared anymore, just tired!

## White Rock Lake

Occasionally I'd go in to work for a little while on Sundays, but no more than I had to. We wanted at least one day out of each week for something different. It was usually our only time for "fun." I wish I could say that Sundays were our days to go to church, but they weren't. Being away from Southern California and the areas that we were so familiar with, made it interesting for Lenore and me to find new places to see, to "explore our new territory."

One day when we were looking at a Dallas map, soon after we'd moved into the duplex on Vickery Boulevard, we saw a lake that was only about three miles or farther east, and a little north. We could hardly wait to check it out! It was beautiful! And really quite large. It was White Rock Lake, and it was close enough for us to even go out there once in a while after I'd get home from work on a long summer evening.

Chips loved to go to the lake with us! There was a place on the west side where we could rent a row boat, and when we'd pull into that parking lot Chips just about went crazy waiting for us to open the car door for him to get out! Once we'd get into the boat, he'd park himself right up in the bow; he'd snap at flies that would be buzzing around, and every once in a while he'd jump overboard for a swim. We'd let him paddle around for a little while, then I'd row the boat over to him, and Lenore would lean out to reach him, and pull him back in. He would shake the water off, and it was instant showers all around! Such fun!

Sometimes we'd leave Chips at home and go out to White Rock without him -- so we could rent bicycles at a bike rental place on the east



shoreline. There were paths and untraveled roads along the lake shore, and it was fun to ride along and watch fishermen in their rowboats, or people enjoying their sailboats. If we were there after dark in the summertime, we liked the fireflies. We'd never seen those in California!

Spotted here and there were beautiful mansions with rolling front lawns that led down to the lake, or at least to the highway that circled the lake. It was all so beautiful.

Invariably, when we'd be out in a row boat, fishermen would call to us from their boats to ask if we were catching anything. We'd call back, "Oh, we're not fishing, we're just rowing for fun." The "native Texans" couldn't figure us out!

#### **Our New Camera**

The Brownie camera I'd gotten when I was twelve years old was long gone, and Lenore had never had a camera of her own, so Dad Cain had loaned us his box camera before we left California so we could take pictures along the way. Even though he didn't use the camera (Lenore's mother had been the "picture taker" in their family), soon after we arrived in Dallas we thought we should buy a camera of our own, so we could mail Dad Cain's back to him.

That's the explanation for the day we took off to find the local Sears store. We didn't know exactly where it was, but as we headed toward downtown Dallas we saw a Sears truck. (I hate to admit the dumb thing we did!) We were so sure the driver would be heading for the

store that we decided to follow the truck -- instead of pulling alongside at one of his stops, and asking for directions to the store.

Sometime later, after seeing most of the south side of Dallas and parts of Oak Cliff, we began to think maybe this approach wasn't so smart. Then we did the logical thing -- we stopped, looked up the store address in the phone book, got out our city map, and tried again. Finally -- there was Sears, Roebuck and Company!

As we were looking at the inexpensive box cameras, we got carried away and began looking at the movie cameras! The salesman who was waiting on us must have just been awarded the "Salesman of the Year" plaque! When he got through ringing up our around \$200.00 purchase, we had bought an 8mm. Revere movie camera, a Revere projector, a screen, flood lights, two light reflectors, a lens filter for use with indoor lighting, and, of course, several rolls of 8mm. film. We didn't know one thing about using a movie camera, but after spending that much money, we knew we'd better learn all about it in a hurry! We drove back home muttering, "What have we done!"

Just as soon as we got into the house, we started unpacking the items and reading the instruction booklets. We were up almost all night taking pictures of the inside of our duplex -- sort of a personalized "home tour." Oh, what fun!

Those little rolls of film whizzed through the camera in such a few minutes, then we had to wait almost two weeks to see the pictures! We couldn't take them to a local WalMart for one-hour processing; no, they had to be mailed to a distant plant, then wait for the processed film to arrive in the mail. I remember that we couldn't stand waiting that long to try out the new projector and screen, so we bought a commercial "Donald Duck" cartoon movie to watch right away.

We didn't know the difference between "film speed" and "shutter speed," so we made up our own rules: We figured we'd save film if we'd cut it down to "8 frames per second" instead of the "16 frames per second," as prescribed in the instruction booklet. We tried out our theory by filming Dorothy Kemp coming out of the front door of their home, and walking to their car. When we got that roll back from the processing lab we decided we needed to read the book a little more carefully! (Dorothy did "double time" in her leisurly walk to the car!)

Little by little, we learned to handle the camera pretty well. We still have our movies that we took at White Rock Lake, and other fun things that we did. We took pictures of downtown Dallas, too, and Fair Park and the amphitheater, where we saw Broadway-quality musicals on summer evenings.

We even filmed a segment of the busy Dallas-to-Fort Worth highway and the triple underpass -- the very route which, some twenty years later, President John F. Kennedy's motorcade would drive as it traveled in front of the book depository building from where the assassin's bullet was fired from a third floor window. (I drove that same route every day, on my way to and from work, never realizing its eventual significance in history.) Lenore and I tried to "capture" scenes and activities that we could share with our family and friends -- when we'd get back to California.

Yes, that purchase was a shock at the time, but how glad we've been over the years for the memories that the little movie camera stored up for us (and Dad Cain didn't mind at all that we continued to use his camera for "stills"). We still have the old movie camera, projector, and the old movies, and we'll gladly show the pictures to anyone not subject to "flickeritis."



## Possum Kingdom

I was always glad when there was a break from the pressures of the work schedules that had to be adhered to, so there was one particular time that I recall when I arranged to take a Saturday off. The couple next door east, R.M. and Julia Roberts, realized how much we were missing the beaches and ocean of Southern California, so they insisted that we should see a nice camping place that they knew about, a place where there was water and fishing.

We pooled our gasoline coupons, piled some food, clothes, bedding, and Chips into our car (R.M. and Julia didn't have a car; they had to borrow her dad's when they needed to go someplace they couldn't get to by street car), and as soon as we could get away that Friday evening, the four of us were on our way to Possum Kingdom! Really. That was the name of the place. It was out somewhere west of Fort Worth, and it was almost midnight by the time we reached a certain point where R.M. said, "Here's where we turn to the right" -- or maybe it was "left" -- that's been a long time ago! He could hardly wait to show us his good ol' fishin' spot!

We left the highway, and started on a bumpy, dusty dirt road! I asked if he was sure this was the right road, and he assured me that it was. "Just a little farther, and we'll be at Possum Kingdom!"

In the headlights, I thought that every now and then I could see something crawling across the road. Finally we stopped, got out a flashlight -- and, sure enough, what we had been seeing were Texas-size tarantulas! "Oh, they won't hurt you," R.M. said.

When we finally arrived, we were directed to an abandoned dance pavilion as a place to spread out our blankets . . . the camp manager told us, "You'll be above the dirt on that cement floor, and the tarantulas won't be crawlin' around up there." That old dance pavilion was at the end of the dirt road that led into the campground, and the headlights on the cars of arriving campers kept rolling in, off 'n on, during what was left of the night. With every arriving car, Chips would bark his head off! Needless to say, we didn't sleep much that night.

With the coming of the new day, R.M. and I went to see what we could see of Possum Kingdom. It was obvious that even R.M. was disappointed because everything showed the effects of a very dry year. The river that flowed into the small lake was not much more than a stream. Other people around us were expressing disappointment also.

Julia and Lenore had done their best to fix a camp-style breakfast for us. Then after we'd eaten, R.M. and I got a boat to try our luck at a little fishing, but after a while a wind came up making the lake choppy. It was mutually agreed that it looked like it was going to blow up a rain and that maybe it would be best to just pack up and head for home.

Sure enough, sprinkles began to fall just as we were ready to leave. We really weren't too disappointed, we kept telling ourselves as we drove back to Dallas in the rain . . . at least we had finally gotten to see Possum Kingdom.

R.M. and Julia were a lot of fun, and we did a lot of sightseeing together. Since they'd lived in Texas all of their lives, they knew of interesting places for us to see, and we always had good laughs with them about the time they showed us Possum Kingdom.

### **My Unexpected Parentheses**

I don't remember the exact date, but sometime in the spring of 1943 I was told by Holly Smith, my boss, that an urgent call had come from the Inglewood plant for the "loan" of immediate manpower. They needed help to supplement their own people who were not going to be able to meet an important schedule without it. This was what was called a "hot shot" program, one which would have a foreseeable conclusion and the personnel who had been temporarily supplied would return to their original location.

In this case, help was needed to meet committed schedules associated with major revisions to the P-51 to make possible the use of a different and larger engine -- the European-made Rolls-Royce Merlin (later manufactured by the the Packard Motor Car Company, here in the States).

Holly had been told that the men would be needed for an expected six-week period, with the possibility of extension; they were asking for a manpower allotment of twelve persons. Lodging for the "crew" would be at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, and company cars would be provided for transportation.

I was told that I had been appointed to head up the group, that I was to select eleven men to go with me, and to be ready to leave in about a week. Woody Atherton would serve as acting supervisor of my Dallas-based group in my absence, so I knew they would be in good hands.

The men were selected, schedules were adjusted, and all of the many other details were covered -- I hoped! The guys were excited, most had



never been to California before, some had never seen an ocean. Except for leaving Lenore for that period of time, I was excited, too; after all, it would be a trip back home for me!

We flew on an American Airlines DC-3 from Love Field in Dallas, and conversation on the plane was lively! Several asked me if I thought they would see any movie stars since we were to be housed in the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. I assured them that they probably would, and I think they believed me! Yes, the excitement was high!

For me, it was a strange feeling that the plane we were flying on would be landing at Mines Field (now LAX) which was adjacent to the plant where we'd be working -- my "home base."

I remember that as we neared the L.A. airport we were instructed to close the window curtains, and to make no attempt to look out until permission was announced. I know those Texas guys were disappointed for they were anxious to get their first glimpse of the area, but this was wartime, and security was tight.

THEY COULD HAVE  
BEEN SPIES  
TAKING PICTURES.

As I recall, we were met at the terminal by a guy representing our new boss, Carter Hartley, General Manager of the Engineering Division in which we were to become involved. Our escort took us to "Security" for clearance, then on to Mr. Hartley's office where a lot of things took place in a very short time.

We were all issued temporary IDs, and briefed on the work ahead. I was to be in charge of our little group since, as Carter put it, I was the only one who "spoke Texan."

I don't remember how we got there the first night, but we were taken to the Hollywood Roosevelt where reservations for six rooms had been made in advance, and our meals in the hotel's Cine-Grill were

included. We were told company transportation would pick us up at six-thirty the next morning for our return trip to the plant. Then, two company cars would be issued to us that next day.

By then it was late and everyone was tired, but we went into the *BEAUTIFUL* Cine-Grill for something to eat before turning in that first night. I'll never forget the expressions of unbelief on the faces of those Texas guys when, here and there in that plush restaurant, they saw blacks and whites seated together at the same tables, talking, laughing, and enjoying each other. That just didn't happen in Texas, or anywhere in the South, in those days.

As we'd been told, at six-thirty the next morning we climbed into a couple of waiting station wagons, headed for the plant, and started into six weeks of extremely intense work. We worked sixty-hour weeks with only Sundays off, and I was very proud of the proficiency and hard work of the guys from Texas.

How well I remember the first Sunday! The company cars were ours to use for both workdays and days off, so we headed for the beach. What a time we had! Everyone went back to the hotel tired and sunburned, but happy and full of talk.

With Grauman's Chinese Theatre just across the street (Hollywood Blvd.) from the hotel, and the Paladium, Florentine Gardens, and other night spots within walking distance, there was never a lack of something to do. (The original "big bands" and the leaders of the '40s were "regulars" at those places, and we all enjoyed that music!)

One Sunday, early in the time we were there, the other fellows arranged their activities so I could have the use of one of the cars, and I got to drive up to Pasadena to spend most of the day with my

mother. I had been writing to her on a regular basis, but it was nice to see her again.

I didn't feel that it was fair for me to be in our "home territory" with Lenore having to stay behind in Texas. We couldn't phone back and forth because non-military long-distance calls were almost impossible to get through during those wartime years, and our budget wouldn't have accommodated the cost, anyway. So, by letter I convinced Lenore that she should try to get a train ticket (civilian transportation was really next-to-impossible!), and come on out, too. I finally got a letter telling me that she thought she had a ticket, and that the train she'd be on was supposed to arrive in at the Union Station, in downtown Los Angeles, at a certain time. Some friends had agreed to take care of Chips, and Dorothy Kemp was going to drive her to the station in Dallas. Since she'd be arriving in L.A. at night, I'd be able to use one of the cars to pick her up. I could hardly wait!

Boy! was she haggard when she came through the gate at the station. When I heard about her trip, I could certainly understand! She said the train was so crowded (mostly military personnel, and a few civilians) that there wasn't always a seat. The dining car was so packed that there was a long line, a long wait, not very much food, but very high prices. But she was there, and that was wonderful!

Staying at that hotel was real "luxury" for us! After all of these years, we still have a couple of clothes hangers with "Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel" imprinted on them! (Hotels and cleaning establishments used printed wooden hangers for their "take home" advertising, back in those days, and it's really nostalgic to occasionally run across one that we've kept from "somewhere.")



Since I was having to work such long days, it was a good thing that she knew her way around in Hollywood and Los Angeles, although it was hard for her to get a seat on a bus or a street car. She did a lot of walking, right there on Hollywood Blvd., because she'd hardly ever been in those stores when we lived in Culver City.

When Sunday rolled around, we used the company car and drove out to Alyce and Henry's home, in Montebello. That was a wonderful family reunion! Henry had driven up to Pasadena to get my mother, and Dad Cain was there with his new lady friend, Fanny McLaughlin. She seemed very nice, and we were glad for that opportunity to meet her. (In one of his letters that he was so faithful in writing to us in Texas, he had told us about his new friend. He had explained that he was very lonely, and that he had met "a very nice widow lady" at a senior citizen's get-together of some kind.) It was so good to be with all of the family again, even though it was for such a short time.

Finally, our six-week period was over, and it was not going to be necessary to extend that time, as we'd originally been told could be a possibility. The work for which we were responsible had been completed on schedule, and Mr. Hartley commended us for it during the last staff meeting before we left to return to Dallas.

I made sure Lenore had a confirmed train reservation, but we knew I'd arrive in Dallas before she did, since our group would be flying. Again, we flew in a DC-3, back to Love Field. I don't remember why, but there was a stopover in Amarillo on that return trip.

I know the Texas guys were all happy to be home again in Texas with family and friends. I was glad that all had gone well, and I was ready to relieve Woody, who had done an excellent job in my absence.

## Lake Fannin

Chet Harrison was the one of our closest friends who was out of town a lot because of his work, so I think he was probably the one who "discovered" Lake Fannin, then came back home excited about it. It was about sixty miles north of Dallas, up on the Red River, where it divides Texas and Oklahoma. No matter how we heard about it, the Harrisons, the Kemps, and we decided we'd have to manage some way of getting up there to check it out.

Since there'd be six adults, Valerie, Myrna and Chet's little two-year-old, Kemps' dog, and Chips, we knew we'd have to use two cars. That meant pooling a lot of gasoline coupons, but we got all the logistics worked out. We planned our jaunt for a time that Bob Kemp and I could manage a Saturday and Sunday away from the plant, and a time when Chet Harrison wasn't going to be gone on a business trip. We didn't know for sure what to expect, but we took bedding and food for the weekend, and went on our way.

It was "rustic," but a vast improvement over Possum Kingdom! We were able to get a big cottage with a lot of cots, and some kind of a kitchen. I don't remember a lot of details about the housing, but I remember how much fun we had. We swam in the lake, dogs and people; there was an anchored floating wooden platform, about 12-feet square, that we could swim out to. We used it for a diving platform, or for just lying in the sun. Our enthusiasm was somewhat subdued when a caretaker told us, "Might be a good idea for you young folks to watch out for the water moccasins that like to congregate under that float."

We never did see any, so we didn't let it hinder the fun we were having. Anyway, in Texas you learned to co-exist with such things.

There wasn't much to do around there -- it was quite a ways out in the country from the closest town. There were walking paths that led through some kind of trees and low-growing mesquite, complete with chiggers that lurked in the grasses that grew in that powdery red soil. I do remember that there was a place down the road where we could rent clodhopper horses. One or the other of us would take Valerie up into the saddle with us, and the two dogs would bark as they ran along nipping at the horses' heels. Then, at night we'd play cards -- and swat mosquitoes and other flying critters!

There was one building that had a big room with redwood tables and benches, and we could go there to buy cold drinks and sandwiches. We saw a bulletin board on the wall, and it had an announcement tacked on it that read: "Sign up here for the Sunday morning Chuck Wagon Breakfast On the Trail." Of course, there was a charge posted, but it sounded like it would be fun. We all signed up!

And it was fun! They'd pulled a real cowboy-style chuck wagon onto a clearing near the lake, and there was an open fire where two or three cooks in western gear were "fixin'" sausage, pancakes, scrambled eggs, and all kinds of good stuff. And of course, there were tin plates and cups, and big pots of coffee, too! Someone played a guitar, and people gathered around to sing. We really enjoyed that "Chuck Wagon Breakfast on the Trail!"

Lake Fannin wasn't "luxurious," but neither was it expensive. During the time we were in Texas, we managed to make those weekend outings three or four times.



### **"Company" from Home**

Remember my old flying buddy, best man at our wedding, and good friend, Johnny Holmes? When the threat of war was looming, the college flight training programs that he'd taken part in had been concluded. As soon as that had taken place, Johnny applied for service in what was originally called the Ferry Command, but later became known as the Air Force Air Transport Command (ATC). Not only was he accepted, he was commissioned a lieutenant! Lenore and I were so happy when we heard that news, because we knew Johnny was well-qualified to fulfill that responsibility.

The purpose for the ATC was to move -- to "ferry" in flight -- military aircraft from one place to another, for various reasons, and Johnny was soon deeply involved.

The reason for mentioning this just now is because Johnny's assignments often took him from "somewhere in the west" to "somewhere in the east" (during wartime, such assignments and destinations were "secret"). So, we never had advance notice, but we were always thrilled when Lt. Johnny Holmes would phone us from Love Field, there in Dallas and just a short distance north of where we lived, and tell us he was in town for an overnight layover.

We'd hurry there to pick him up, stop for dinner somewhere on our way back to our place, then sit up till all hours -- we never tired of listening while he told of his adventures.

ATC pilots were "airplane jockeys" whose responsibility it was to fly a plane, any plane (Johnny had a "multi-engine" rating) from here to

there, per the dictates of the military. The pilots usually had the first leg of their flight as "passengers" on a commercial plane, then pick up a military plane which had to be "delivered" to a plant, or a base, for repairs, or some modifications of some kind. Believe me, Johnny really had adventures and experiences to tell about!

One particular incident that I remember his telling about was the time he was flying a Lockheed Hudson bomber from the east coast back to Burbank for repair work that was to be done there at the Lockheed plant. I don't know exactly what had happened to that plane, but Johnny said it was like trying to fly a "bucket of bolts."

Then, there was another time when he told us about a flight when the aircraft he was flying was struck by lightening, and both he and the co-pilot were temporarily blinded as a result of that strike. The navigator was asleep at the time of the strike, but the jolt woke him in a hurry! Johnny said that it was fortunate that the lightening had struck just forward of the pilots' enclosure; a few feet further back, and they could have all been killed. (Apparently the plane sustained little or no structural, electrical nor mechanical damage, since they were able to continue on their flight. They were indeed fortunate!)

Lenore likes to tell about one time when Johnny phoned from Love Field on one of the nights when I was hung up with teaching my class at SMU, and wasn't going to be home until late. She picked him up, then he insisted that dinner was going to be on him, and he wanted her to drive them to the nicest seafood place that she knew about -- he was hungry for lobster. (Lobster? She'd never had it!) She went to a place that we'd only heard about; we usually went to a little restaurant down on Greenville Avenue when we ate out, and they certainly didn't serve

lobster! She told Johnny that he'd have to do the ordering, because she didn't know anything about lobster. (He was such a close friend of ours that she told me later they were laughing together about it, there was no embarrassment.) Not only did he do the ordering, but he told her how to tie her bib, and then he did the cracking! Come to think of it, I can't remember that Lenore has ever ordered lobster since!

Then, there was another exciting time when we had "company" from home. Again, like the times when Johnny would phone from Love Field, the phone rang, and we were soon on our way to make another pick up. This time it wasn't Johnny -- it was Alice Cooper! I've talked about Alice many, many pages back. It was her dad that sold my dad the little house that got moved onto The Grove, there in Otterbein; it was Alice's brother who'd recommended Lenore for the job with the phone company; yes, our friendship with Alice was one of long standing.

When we met her at the gate at Love Field, she could hardly wait to show us her diamond engagement ring! She had arranged her schedule so she could stay overnight with us, before flying on to some town on the east coast where Johnny Holmes was stationed for a couple weeks. She was on her way to become Mrs. John L. Holmes! Such excitement!

After they were married, they established their home in the Pasadena area, then Johnny continued to fly from the west coast for his various assignments.

Johnny flew for the ATC until that branch of the Air Force was discontinued at the close of the war. That was when he began flying for the commercial branch of the Flying Tigers Line. As time went on, he eventually took a desk job with the Flying Tigers, and remained in that position until his retirement.



## Continuing Challenges at Work

We were approaching our second year in Dallas and many of the problems that we had experienced at work were smoothing out. By now my group consisted of around 50 persons, most of whom had become very responsible and capable workers.

Among other things, the engineering department was involved in a proposed major change to the front of the aircraft -- namely, the addition of a nose turret with two 50-caliber machine guns to replace the existing bombardier nose that did not give the aircraft forward fire power.

Several engineering groups were involved in this, particularly the armament and the electrical groups, among others.

It was a major change and we were hoping that North American's design would be accepted over those that were being proposed by other companies. We had proposal contract funding to produce an experimental turret that could be tested by the Army at their test facility.

The new design would allow the operator to rotate the turret in azimuth (that is, around a vertical axis) about 100 degrees. One of the major problems confronting the armament design people was the disposal of the casings from the shells which had been fired. It took a while, but eventually the problem was satisfactorily resolved.

(I didn't intend to get bogged down in details, but it has been gratifying to reminisce about that challenging assignment.) In due time, a working model was made by North American's engineering shop, then hours upon hours were spent in exhaustive testing. Finally, as

specified by contract, it was delivered to the Air Force for their testing and evaluation.

Eventually, North American's design was accepted. Then, data packages which included drawings, specs, etc., were turned over to the customer to be distributed to the other companies that were also building the B-24s.

Obviously, I am writing all of this from memory, but I can well remember the headaches! So, the next time you are in an air museum and happen to see a B-24 with a nose turret you will know a little about the problem-plagued background involved in its design.

Even though I was deeply immersed in my work, there was always a gnawing desire to sign up for the Air Force. Here and there in my "Memoirs" I've told about my interest in flying, and it seemed more profound now that our country was at war. But I've also related how those who were employed in a defense industry were "frozen" in their jobs, especially if they were in a supervisory capacity; we lost to the draft many who were not. "Draft notices" were routinely mailed to all "eligible males" (that is, those in good health and of "draft age"), and every time I received mine, through company intervention, a deferment would be granted prior to the specified date for induction, and I had nothing to do with it. It was the same for all of supervision, but not so for regular workers -- unless they were deferred for reasons of health, age, family status, etc.

However, as time went on I attempted to enlist in the Air Force; Lenore even went with me to the recruiting office to sign a "wife's waiver." For a while there were some indications that I might be accepted! But then came the same official notice of "mandatory

deferment because of supervisory status in defense industry." So, I continued with "doing my part for my country" by involvement in "defense employment."

There was a lot of pressure -- and many headaches -- but I always found my work challenging and gratifying -- especially when a project was at last satisfactorily completed.

### **My "Model" Wife**

While I was busy, very busy, during those "Dallas days," Lenore found that she had lots of time on her hands and was getting antsy for something to do.

Imagine my surprise when I came home from work one evening and she announced that she had been hired for a modeling job by A. Harris & Co., one of Dallas' leading department stores. One day each week, during the lunch hour, that store staged a fashion show at the Adolphus Hotel, and for something special, Lenore and Dorothy Kemp had gone there for lunch. As they'd enjoyed the fashion show, Lenore had begun telling Dorothy about the times that she had done some modeling for a nice dress shop in Fullerton, during her junior college days. The more she reminisced, the stronger the urge became to apply at the Dallas store.

It wasn't really a big deal, but it was fun for her. The fashion shows were on one certain day each week (I don't remember which one), and she went to the store for fittings a couple of days ahead. Two or three times, I managed to take a long lunch hour so I could go to the Adolphus Hotel on "Fashion Show" day -- not exactly "my thing," but I was proud of her.



For a gal who did most of her own sewing, the dresses, suits and coats seemed very expensive. I suppose they really were, because it was a very "high class" store. Sometimes, when she'd modeled something she really liked, after the show she'd go to the store's fabric department, buy material similar to that which she'd worn, then make an almost identical outfit for herself. (I was proud of her for being able to do that, too!)

Lenore wasn't aware of the fact that Dallas-based fashion magazine photographers were frequently in the lunch-time audiences, but one day she was contacted by one after the style show, and he asked her if she'd be interested in occasional photography modeling. She checked him out with the woman who was the fashion coordinator for A. Harris & Co., and was told that this was not unusual. So many nationally known fashions were designed and made in Dallas, so it was only good business for fashion magazines and catalogs to also be published in Dallas. We talked it over, and agreed that it would be all right -- as long as everything was decent and in good taste. Again, the fashion coordinator vouched for the integrity of the photographer, so she was called for "posing" on location" once in a while.

She was just getting a good start in what may have become a real career for her, but the timing wasn't right. For me, and all of us who had been transferred to Dallas a couple of years earlier, it was understood that our role in the B-24 program was primarily to handle the initial phases, then gradually turn the responsibilities over to capable local people to oversee the final wrap up of the contract.

At this point in time the transition was becoming a major topic of discussion in our management meetings, so it was obvious that we might soon be returning to California.

For then, though, Lenore stayed with the modeling and it was fun for her, but she didn't really regret that it was apparently not going to be a long-lasting career. The possibility of going "home" soon was more exciting.

### **Winding Down**

The major assembly layouts and drawings were pretty well completed, and so were the sub-assemblies and miscellaneous details associated with them. By this time, each group within Engineering, and each related department, had organized itself to the point where it was an efficiently operating unit.

Maybe it was the patriotic aspect, since this was indeed a war effort, but in all the years that I was involved in aircraft, and other military-related programs, I don't remember any time when so many people worked so diligently to achieve a common goal -- that of defeating our enemy: Japan and the Axis nations in Europe.

As usual, there was a lot of personnel "loaning" going on: some groups would be in need of additional people for short periods of time, and would "borrow" from other groups. It was gratifying to know that Woody Atherton, "Dub" Rouse and Leonard Giesert were capably running the fuselage group activities, now that we were in a maintenance phase. All three of them were Texas fellows who would remain at the Dallas plant to handle the "wind down."

I had turned over a lot of the responsibility to those men, and to others, because the intent was to return California supervision back to

Inglewood wherever possible, so my action was in accord with management planning.

It was in August of 1944 that we, along with several other of the California guys, their wives and their families, said our good-byes and were off for "home." The "good-byes" were bittersweet. We looked forward to returning to what we'd called "home" for most of our lives, yet Dallas had been "home" for long enough to have logged a lot of new experiences, and we'd made many good friends. We knew we'd probably never see most of them again.

Nevertheless, for us it was the conclusion of "our Texas years"; the time had come to head for California!



**"California, Here We Come!"**

We could hardly believe the time had really come! We'd acquired a few more "possessions" during the time we were in Dallas, but North American Aviation fulfilled their agreement to foot the moving expenses "round trip," and we were more than anxious to have everything ready for the moving van on the day scheduled for "pick up."

Again, as when we'd moved to Texas, we loaded our car to the hilt with clothing and personal things we'd need until we could find a place to rent -- back home again, in California. And, since we knew we could leave Chips with Dad Cain while we looked for an apartment, we took him along in the car with us, instead of shipping him on the train. Chips loved riding in the car and was a good traveler, so we thought it would be fun to have him with us.

And, as when we'd traveled to Texas, Lenore had written to her Aunt Jutie, in Tucumcari, New Mexico, and she and Minnie and Clay, her daughter and son-in-law, cordially invited us to spend some time with them. Yes, even Chips was going to be welcome!

Finally, we said our good-byes to our Texas friends who, by then, had become very dear to us, and we were on our way home! We had planned an itinerary that would permit a little bit of sight-seeing along the way, so we were really looking forward to the trip. We were glad we had our trusty movie camera for "documenting" those adventures, and that Dad Cain had insisted that we keep the box camera that he had "loaned" to us when we'd gone to Texas.

From Dallas, we headed west to Fort Worth, then angled north-west toward Amarillo. We hadn't gotten away very early in the day, so it was the wee small hours of the morning when our water pump on the car gave up the ghost -- out in the middle of nowhere! We limped on in to Amarillo, then waited in the car until a repair shop opened up. (No sleep that night!) When the car was finally ready, we were on our way to Tucumcari.

After a couple of days with Lenore's relatives, we once again headed out on "Route 66" -- but this time we were traveling west! As we'd driven east, a couple years before, we'd noticed an interesting-sounding place on the map, so this time we decided we'd take the time to go see it -- the Acoma Pueblo. It was an Indian Reservation located some fifteen miles south of the highway, and about halfway between Albuquerque and Gallup. From a distance it looked like a top hat on a table -- the table being the flat desert-land.

From where the road ended, we could see some adobe huts high atop a craggy shale mountain. The only access from where we had to leave the car was by hiking along a path up the five- or six-hundred-feet-high mountain. The path was so steep that Chips whined every now and then as we "encouraged" him up by tugging on his leash or carrying him. What an interesting place we found it to be. Once up there, we could see that an adobe church occupied a prominent place in the hilltop community, and adobe houses were scattered here and there, each with its own bread oven beside it. A donation bucket was placed in an obvious place; after we'd used it for its intended purpose, we were greeted by a "religious leader" who volunteered to show us around. He told us that the Indians call it "Sky City," and that some of them are born up there, live their

entire life, then die there -- without ever going down from the mountain. The venturous ones worked in grain fields down in the flatlands, and their farm animals were kept down below. Occasionally, someone would go by wagon -- the fifteen-or-so miles to "fetch" staple supplies and a tank-full of water for the "Sky City" dwellers.

Those are facts that I recall from fifty years ago. In more recent years, while on a trip to Colorado, Lenore and I decided to drive down to "Sky City" again. Imagine our surprise to find a toll booth at the end of the main road, then a small dirt road for visitors to use for driving to the top of the mountain. (We turned around and headed back to the main highway; we wanted to remember it as it had been in the "olden days.")

I don't remember for sure where we stayed that night, but I do know that if it was in Gallup we were smart enough to find a different motel than where we'd stayed when we'd driven to Texas -- one far away from the railroad switching yards!

Our other side trip was to go up north from Flagstaff, Arizona, to see the Grand Canyon. What a thrill that was! Yes, it was a thrill for us to finally get to see it, but when we think of that trip, we always have to laugh. After the drive to get there, Chips was excited when the car stopped -- he was always anxious to get out for "natural" reasons, and to play for a while. We made sure his leash was snapped onto the ring on his collar, and it was a good thing: he tugged and lunged over to the very edge of the canyon, took one look down, then whimpered and cried, crouched down, shoved it into reverse, and backed away as fast as he could! He'd never seen such a big hole in the ground! Nor had we!

We'd planned to stay in Williams, Arizona, that night, but it was



still fairly early in the afternoon when we got away from the Grand Canyon, and we were so excited about being so close to "home" that we decided to keep driving! Dad Cain and Fanny had been married while we were in Texas, so we thought it would be fun to surprise them for breakfast!

So on we drove! How we cheered when we crossed the Colorado River! We took turns driving, and kept the radio blaring away to keep the driver awake! Finally, about 6:30 in the morning we drove up the driveway that led up the hill to the ranch house in Brea Canyon. No one ever drove up that driveway without Queen, Dad Cain's dog, announcing your presence, and this time Chips was doing his part from the car window! We were so excited!

Dad Cain was the first out of the back screen door, and Fanny wasn't far behind him. Neither could believe that we were there -- they weren't expecting us until the next day. Chips knew immediately where he was, and so did we! Dad Cain helped Fanny prepare breakfast for us, and we had a good time getting better acquainted with her as we told them all about our return trip. How good it was to be home!

After a while with them, we left Chips behind, and took off for Montebello to see Alyce and Henry, and their kids. I don't remember if Henry was home (he was a produce broker and was on the road a lot), but we at least got to surprise Alyce and Carolyn and Lynn.

Again, I don't remember for sure, but we probably spent that night with them, so we could leave from Montebello for the fairly short drive to Pasadena the next day. We were anxious to see my mother, and to spend some time with her.

From there, we went to West Los Angeles to see Rollie and Inez, the

couple who'd helped us with our move from Culver City to Pasadena (and then, back again!) -- as I've said before, they always seemed like "second parents" to us. When they found out that we hadn't yet begun looking for an apartment, they warned us that it wasn't going to be easy to find one -- it was still "war years," and housing was at a premium. They insisted that we were going to stay with them until we could find a place. We hated to impose, but their home was more than adequate, and it wasn't too far for me to drive to work from there. We'll never forget their generosity -- Inez even drove Lenore around to look for an apartment, since I needed our car for my own transportation.

Boy! That "house-looking" went on for a while! Finally, as I was driving to West L.A. one afternoon after work, I happened to glance to the west from the vicinity of Sepulveda and Manchester Boulevards and saw some construction going on. I drove over to check it out and found that some apartment duplexes were being built. When I got back to Inez and Rollie's, I told Lenore the location, and Inez assured me they'd drive over there the next morning. We really hoped that might turn into a good prospect for us, since it was only about three miles north of the North American plant.

Lenore found out when the places were expected to be ready for occupancy, and she was able to get our names onto a waiting list. Rollie and Inez were stuck with us for a while longer, but the phone call finally came! We were told when we could plan to move in! Our new address was soon to be on El Manor Drive -- a block west of Sepulveda Blvd. to El Manor Drive, just the second duplex south of La Tijera Avenue, in Westchester. (Don't bother to go looking for the location now! The entire area has been swallowed up by a shopping complex, and

the runways of the vastly expanded LAX are just a short distance to the south!)

I don't remember how much the rent was, but probably around forty dollars a month, since the place wouldn't be furnished. Unfurnished! That was scary! The duplexes had two bedrooms, a large living room, dining area, kitchen and bathroom. We had shopping to do!

When we went furniture shopping we felt like lambs headed for the slaughter. We didn't have much money, but the squeeze was on, so we had no choice. We tried to make wise purchases -- just the basics: a matching sofa and chair, and an "occasional" chair for the living room; an inexpensive drop-leaf table and four chairs for the dining area; the bare essentials for the bedroom; a couple of lamps for here and there; a stove and an ice box. We knew that our coffee table and the "accent" table that held our record player would help to "fill up" the living room, and Lenore's sewing machine and chair could go in the extra bedroom. The floors were hardwood, so we bought a 9-by-12 woven straw "rug" for the living room, and a couple of "throw rugs" for the bedroom.

We arranged for the delivery of our new furniture and our things that were still in storage to coincide with the date that the builder had given us for "move-in." Boy! Were we ever excited when the day finally came! A brand new apartment with our own furniture! Then, just as soon as we could, we drove out to the ranch to get Chips so he could begin to get acquainted with our new rented place.

Our "Texas years" were over! We were so happy to finally be back home again, in California!



## PART NINE: HOME AGAIN!

1944 - 1945

### Chapter 45 39

#### Back to Work, Family, and Friends!

I was overwhelmed with nostalgia when I returned to work back in the old Engineering department that I had left nearly three years before. It was kind of like "going home again," yet there were many new faces, and some that I looked for were no longer there -- for one reason or another.

A luncheon was given for the group who had recently returned from Dallas, both for those of us who'd been on the B-24 program, and those who'd been on other assignments. The luncheon was just in our own cafeteria, so it wasn't really a big deal -- and yet it was. It was a nice gesture of appreciation, and it was appreciated!

It was good to be back in a program where I was no longer burdened with the responsibilities of supervision; I always said that took the fun out of Engineering! Instead, I was assigned to a development program which at the time was considered "secret."

Those of us who were on that program were sequestered in an area above the cafeteria, and that area was known as "Confidential Engineering." At all times there was a security person at the door to check the clearance of anyone coming or going. I spent quite some time in "Confidential" working on various ~~programs~~ <sup>programs</sup>, and I really enjoyed it.  
OK

It was during that time in "Confidential" that I got to know

Charlie White, Henry Carlisle and others. I didn't value those friendships then as much as I did after I became a Christian -- but that story comes later.

It was good to be back "home" -- I was enjoying my work, it was great to be able to go out to the ranch to visit with Dad Cain and Fanny, to go to my mother's from time to time, or to go to Alyce and Henry's for family get-togethers. Lenore and I were enjoying our very comfortable apartment, and living so close to my work was a real bonus! We were very pleased with the way things had worked out for us.

Since we were back from the "far country," and in a place that was large enough to do so, we decided to invite our old Christian Endeavor gang from Otterbein for a reunion (of sorts!) at our place there in Westchester. We knew that not everyone would be there -- the war was still going strong, and some of the guys were involved. But we were anxious to round up the ones who were not too far away.

The evening finally came, and what a good time that turned out to be! We'd just thought our place was large! There must have been about thirty people there, and it was indeed wall-to-wall people! It was so great to see our old friends again.

Indeed! It was good to be home!

### **"Changes" Ahead!**

It was in 1945, while we were living on El Manor, in Westchester, that we received the news that we'd been hoping for for almost five years! Lab reports came back, and the doctor told us that -- at last! -- we'd be welcoming our "Bundle of Joy" sometime in January of 1946!

There are no words to express how happy we were! We almost couldn't believe it! We were so thankful!

My mother was so happy to hear that she was going to become a grandmother! Lenore's dad had already been a grandpa two times, but it had been quite some time since Carolyn and Lynn had been born, so he was excited all over again! Alyce and Henry were delighted, too; Mildred and Al, Lenore's other sister and her brother, were never real gung-ho about children, but even they seemed pleased to know that their "baby sister" was going to be a mother.

Tom and Pauline Self were still in Kansas City, but Lenore and Pauline kept in touch by mail on a regular basis. We had recently received wonderful news from them: an announcement telling us that they were the proud adoptive parents of a little baby girl, Kathleen. We were so glad that it was beginning to look like they'd soon be transferred back to California because we were anxious to ~~to~~ see Tom and Pauline of course, but we were really looking forward to "meeting" their new little daughter! And now that they were already parents, it wouldn't be so difficult to tell them our news.

Probably the couple we were most reluctant to share our news with was Dorothy and Bob Kemp. We knew that they, too, had been hoping to have a baby, but they hadn't yet had that joy. Just the same, we wanted to tell them, so Lenore proceeded to make plans for having them over some evening, then "ease" them into our news.

Before we had been able to invite them, Bob Kemp told me at work that they wanted us to go to their house on a certain evening, at a certain time. (We guys had to be the go-betweens for any "social planning" because neither of us couples had been able to get a



telephone! War years meant a lot of "inconveniences.") When we got to their house, they both blurted out, "Surprise! We're going to have a baby!" So, in our state of shock, Lenore and I shouted, "So are we!" Needless to say, during the next few months Dorothy and Lenore did a lot of shopping and sewing -- together!

Our spare "bedroom" that had been used for storing odds and ends (and Lenore's sewing machine and chair), suddenly became my workroom -- my "shop." We didn't have a garage, and, after all, a daddy-to-be needed someplace to begin working on unfinished furniture for a baby-to-be! We agreed that our baby was going to need some furniture of "its" own (that was back in the pre-sonogram days), so the parents-to-be went shopping! We picked out a nice, large, unfinished chest of drawers, and I spent many happy evening hours sanding and finishing it, there in that spare room. What fun that was!

The anticipation of the so long-awaited event was almost more than we could believe!

### **Peace!**

With the excitement of looking forward to the arrival of our baby, it was hard to keep my mind on my work.

Meanwhile, the war was still raging --both in Europe and in the Pacific. Once again I have turned to the pages of our WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIAS for some dates and documentations.

"On April 22, 1945, Soviet troops were shelling Berlin. . . . On April 27, Soviet and American troops joined at the Elbe River. . . . Rapid advances on all fronts finally quieted when, on May 7, German

emissaries met together with General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Commanding General of American Forces in Europe, at his headquarters in Reims, France, for the purpose of signing the surrender document. It was ratified in Berlin on May 8, 1945.

"In the Pacific, the B-29 raids devastated Japanese cities and industries, but on August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb to be used in warfare was dropped on Hiroshima. . . . President Harry S. Truman summoned Japan to surrender, but that demand was ignored. . . . Then, on August 9, a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. . . . By radio, on August 15, Emperor Hirohito told the Japanese people that Japan had lost the war. . . . Under the leadership of General Douglas Mac Arthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, on September 2, 1945, the Japanese signed the formal surrender aboard the battleship U.S.S. Missouri while she was anchored in Tokyo Bay."

As Allied victory was celebrated throughout the world, we rejoiced because our baby would be born into a world at peace!

### **Work!**

The end of the War brought about an almost immediate slowdown on some of North American Aviation's major contracts with the military.

Those of us in "Confidential" were unaffected because our work dealt with the "development" phase of projects which were always contracted for far in advance of the actual "production." If there was to be a cancellation of a program, it would usually be effected during the "pre-production" phase.

Even at the risk of coming across as "boring," I'm going to go into a little more detail about the role of "Confidential Engineering":

The military, as the customer, would often request changes to existing hardware -- some minor, some very major, and for a variety of urgent reasons. Those requests would be minutely detailed on a "Study Contract" form, and a "classification level" would have been assigned by the military: "Confidential," "Secret," or "Top Secret" designated that the proposal was to be handled by Confidential Engineering; otherwise, it would go through the regular engineering channels. Along with that contract was preliminary funding adequate for starting an engineering evaluation of the request.

Within "Confidential" was a very efficient group of estimators who would work along with the involved Engineering groups to go over the Study Contract in detail to determine costs, time requirements, etc. When completed, the result of the requested evaluation would be submitted to the customer as a complete "package."

If the proposal was accepted, a "Production Contract" would be issued. From that point on, it could be quite expensive for the military to effect major changes, or to cancel all, or any part of, the contract. In other words, if a proposal reached "Production" status it was considered to be fairly permanent. So, not only did I find my work as a structural design engineer to be very stimulating and interesting, but "Confidential" was also a fairly secure department to be in.

However, with the ending of the War it was inevitable that huge layoffs would be required, thereby causing many valuable people to be "lost" to the company. In desperation, and with the hope of avoiding at least some layoffs, a plan was formulated -- really, a "venture," the likes of which N.A.A. had never before attempted.



From its very inception, North American Aviation had been a manufacturer of military aircraft; we had never attempted a commercial venture. But now, with military contracts falling left and right, management decided it just might be the right time for a change to that policy. Thus, using tried and proven basic design techniques gained from years of building some of the world's best military aircraft, the concept of a small private plane emerged.

Even though I wasn't directly involved in the project, many of my friends were, and it was through them that I was able to keep up with what was going on. Much of the engineering consisted of modifications to some P-51 drawings sufficient to cover the building of a prototype plane.

And so was born the "NAVion," the "N A" being North American's initials. It was to be a four-place, high performance, private airplane. Initially, it was intended to sell for just under \$5,000.00. The first one was built and test flown in just a matter of a few weeks! That was a real miracle for both engineering and production!

The NAVion received great publicity, and endorsements from the test pilots who flew it. So, soon after the prototype received its certification, sales were opened to the public. (I've heard that at one time there was a waiting list of over 100 prospective buyers, many wanting a low-cost airplane to fly to and from work.)

But it wasn't "smooth sailing ahead." Manufacturing costs were beginning to run in the red, particularly in the area of tooling. Outside vendors were inflating their costs, and it wasn't long before a sizeable price increase was imposed, then another, and another -- until the airplane was necessarily priced at a level that exceeded that of its main competition -- the Beech-Bonanza.

After some time of struggling to bring costs down to a competitive level, a corporate decision was made to sell the manufacturing rights to Ryan, a San Diego-based company that had expressed interest in such a deal. (Even then, learning of that transaction struck a note of nostalgia for me since it was the Ryan company that had, some twenty years earlier, designed and built the "Spirit of St. Louis" for Charles Lindbergh, my boyhood hero.)

And so, along with the sale of the NAVion went N.A.A.'s one and only attempt to enter the highly competitive field of private or commercial aircraft manufacturing.

I wish I could say that the development of the NAVion had prevented a layoff, but that program had involved relatively few people. During the months following the end of the War, many hundreds of employees were necessarily laid off. Commendably, the company rehired as many as it could just as soon as new proposals were started in the field of missile and guidance system development.

Even though I was directly involved only in North American's ongoing military contracts, it was interesting to keep abreast of all of the company's endeavors. I was always proud to be a part of the "team."

### **Dreams!**

Not only was our long-awaited-for baby on "its" way, but Lenore and I were daring to consider another long-time "dream" -- a home of our own! We felt it would be wonderful to have a place of our own to bring our baby home to (and to start putting money into something for

ourselves, instead of accumulating rent receipts). Over the past several months, we had "looked" occasionally, but property was so high in the west part of Los Angeles that it seemed like an impossible dream, and anyway, it seemed to be getting more and more congested over that way. But we didn't want to locate too far from my work. We just didn't know where would be best to consider, but we kept "looking."

Our long-time friends the Selfs -- Tom, Pauline, and their little daughter, Kathleen -- were finally back from the Kansas City plant, so we were making frequent Sunday afternoon drives to Lynwood to visit with them in their new home. Together with them, we got it all figured out that it would be great if we could find a place in that area, too, so Tom and I could car pool, and the gals could do what gals do when their husbands are off to work.

That's really what caused us to begin focusing on the Lynwood and Compton area, and we finally found a place that we thought we could afford. It wasn't very large (about 900 sq. ft.), but it had two bedrooms, a small service porch (maybe someday we'd have a washing machine!); there wasn't a dining room, but the kitchen had a little "dining corner." It needed some cleaning and painting, but we knew we could take care of those things; it was on a good size lot (50 by 150 ft.), and a picket fence enclosed the entire back yard -- even a double gate across the driveway. We could visualize our little one playing out in that yard someday, and we knew Chips would think he'd died and gone to heaven because it would be the first time in the almost five years of his life that he'd not had to be tethered to a long rope when he was outdoors. There was a detached, single garage (but that was long before we had even thought about being a "two-car family"). It was being sold



with a stove and refrigerator, plus some living room furniture (we didn't need the furniture, but we sure needed the refrigerator and stove!). And the price was right: \$5850.00! We were so excited!

The address was 14422 Butler Avenue -- just a few blocks west of Atlantic Blvd., and two blocks south of Rosecrans Ave. (After a year, or so, the city changed the numbering on the east side of Compton; the new address was 632 No. Butler Avenue.) That was a good central location for us: about 15 miles from my work, and a straight shot up Atlantic for the Saturdays that I'd be going to my mother's place in Pasadena, or for the times we'd be going to Yakels', in Montebello.

The fact that a lot of work was needed, both inside and out, wasn't discouraging. Anyway, I had some vacation time due, and I figured it would be a good way to spend it. I could get part of the inside cleaning and painting done before we'd move in, and then work on the yard whenever time would permit. As I've already said, the house wasn't very large, but small as it was, it was about four times the size of the little house on The Grove that my mother and I had called "home" for those earlier years.

We went ahead with the deal, and our fun began! It seemed like a dream! We were getting ready for our baby for sure! The kitchen and the bathroom needed a lot of cleaning and I tried to get some of that done before we moved in -- I didn't want Lenore to have to tackle the really heavy work, and I wanted it clean for her, too. I don't remember just who we rounded up to help us with the move, ~~and I suppose we got~~ *maybe ramping this would make room?* ~~a truck from somewhere~~, but I do remember that we moved into our "dream home" in October of 1945, sometime around my birthday. We couldn't believe that our dream to have a home of our own had really come true ~~x~~

*and that we were about to embark on some of the happiest days of our lives!*

## PART TEN: THE COMPTON YEARS

1945 - 1954

Chapter ~~44~~ 40

## Family Life

The time was fast approaching for the big event! Lenore was feeling fine with no apparent problems -- except that she couldn't do anything without my telling her to sit down, lie down, take it easy! But we knew we had a lot of work on our "dream home" ahead of us before we'd really be ready for that big event.

Just about the first thing we had to do was have a garage sale (and that was before the term "garage sale" had even been coined!) to get rid of the items that had been included with the house purchase; that is, the things we didn't need. The living room and bedroom furniture that we already had fit just right, and our drop leaf table and four chairs were the right size for the "dining corner" in the kitchen. Otherwise, it was wall-to-wall clutter! It was our first experience with a garage sale; it was fun, and ~~the~~ it gave us a little bit of cash to use toward other things.

Lenore was so happy about getting going on the nursery, the smaller of the two bedrooms. She really got carried away with sewing curtains, redoing a used bassinet that some friends of ours had given us, hanging some cute wall plaques, and, of course, there was a brand new chest of drawers all ready for the room! I soon had plans in mind for a built-in unit -- a play counter, shelves, cupboards, toy chest, the works! But

that was going to have to stay on the "drawing board" for a while. (I knew it would be some time before our baby would be big enough to use it, anyway.)

It was probably around Christmas that we were ready to stand back and marvel at our project! We couldn't believe that it was all ours -- or would be, someday. Of course a lot of outside painting needed to be done, and I was having a good time planning all that I'd like to do with the large backyard, but those projects would have to wait. After all, it was almost January, and we were really getting excited about our next "big event"!

### **Our Blessed Event**

The baby's room was ready, everything was in order. Lenore's sisters, Alyce and Mildred, were eagerly anticipating "the" phone call. So was I! (By the way, we had to drive a little way from our house to a pay phone -- we still couldn't get one in our home because of post-war backlogs of orders. Of course, neighbors had assured us that Lenore could use their phone if she needed to make that special phone call at a time that I was at work, and she didn't have the car.)

Mildred was living in San Diego then, but she was planning to come to be with us for a while so she could help Lenore -- after the baby had arrived. Finally, one day we got a letter from her, in it she told us she couldn't stand it any longer, that she was leaving immediately, and would be taking the bus to Alyce's, and do her waiting there. Then, when "the" phone call would come she'd be closer at hand! We were all on pins 'n needles!



Talk about "antsy" -- the doctor had told us that the 5th of January would most likely be "the" day. A box of cigars was stinking up the lower drawer of my desk at work -- I don't think I'd overlooked anything!

January 5th came . . . and it went. That was the slowest January in history!

Finally! Very early on Sunday morning, January 20th, Lenore told me that she'd had a very uncomfortable night, and that maybe I should drive up to the pay phone and call Dr. Hewitt. We'd need to drive into Los Angeles to California Lutheran Hospital, at 12th and Hope Streets, so we knew we should allow plenty of time. Sure enough, the doctor said that I should take her in right away, and he'd see her later in the day.

Lenore had had her bag packed for weeks, so we took off just as soon as I got back to the house. It was probably around ten o'clock when we got to the hospital, and they admitted her right away.

Then we waited some more. That was one long day! I phoned Alyce to let her and Mildred know we were at the hospital, and she told me that they'd drive in there, too, later in the afternoon. I was so glad! I needed some moral support! Of course I stayed in with Lenore as much as the nurses would let me; I do remember that I went outside to go walking part of the time -- I don't know how many laps I did around the building, and I covered a few blocks of Hope Street, too. Thankfully, it wasn't long after they'd moved Lenore into the Labor Room that Alyce and Mildred showed up around 5 or 6 o'clock, and the three of us headed for the Father's Waiting Room. From time to time, a nurse would stick her head in to report, "Everything's going fine, it won't be much longer now." (It had already been an eternity!)

Modern technology was a wonderful thing! When Lenore and I were at the Admitting desk, I'd been told that a speaker was mounted on the wall in the Father's Waiting Room. The lady had said an announcement would be made when "my" baby arrived! Sure enough! A little after 9:30 there was static that let us know that a microphone had been turned on. Then someone said, "The next 'voice' you hear will be Baby Girl Honline." Then, there was a baby's loud squall! Our baby! I couldn't believe it! The "announcer" continued, "She was born at 9:31 p.m.; she weighs seven pounds, eleven ounces; Mother and Baby are doing well." It was good to know they were "doing well," the three of us in the Waiting Room were basket cases!

It seemed forever before the nurse came out to get me, so I could see Lenore and our baby. I could only stay in for long enough to kiss Lenore, and tell her what a beautiful baby we had. We already knew that her name was "Deanna Lynn": the "De-" was the first part of my mother's unusual first name, "DeForest"; the "-anna" was Lenore's mother's name; the "Lynn" was just because we thought it was a nice-sounding name for a middle name. I'm sure we must have had a boy's name picked out, too, but I honestly don't remember what it was.

Mildred and Alyce weren't allowed in to see Lenore that night, and I couldn't go in again. Things were really done differently then than they are now! Lenore and the baby were kept in the hospital for one full week! Not because there were any problems, that's just the way it was!

After telling Alyce and Mildred good-bye, I stuck around the hospital for long enough to use the phone there to call my mother and Lenore's dad; the Kemps and the Selfs had wanted to be called right

away, too. Then I drove home to our "new" little house in Compton. Looking into the nursery that was "ready and waiting" took on a very different perspective that night. Just one more week and it would be occupied!

The cigar-passing at work had to wait until Tuesday! On Monday I drove back to the hospital so I could see Lenore and our baby, and of course I took flowers for the new mother. First, I went in to see Lenore -- she looked tired, but was all smiles! Then I went to the nursery window to see our new little Deanna Lynn. I decided she was the most beautiful baby I'd ever seen (and she's never outgrown that place in my heart). She had lots of dark, dark hair, and a cute little "button" nose. Then, I went back into Lenore's room to give her my "report." We were both so very happy!

I managed to get back to the hospital each evening after work, and one evening Dorothy and Bob Kemp were there to visit with Lenore and see our baby. They were happy for us, and all the more anxious for their own "overdue" bundle of joy!

Finally the day came when I could take Lenore and our baby home! I left our home in Compton unusually early so I could pick up Mildred at Alyce and Henry's home, in Montebello. When the nurse wheeled Lenore and our baby out in the wheelchair, Mildred was right there with them and I was a little distance away -- taking movies, of course!

I remember that we had a lot of company that afternoon, after we got home. Alyce and Henry came, and I imagine Alyce brought food for us -- she always wanted to help out that way. Then later that afternoon Dad Cain and Fannie drove in from Brea Canyon to check out our new baby. We were so glad that Mildred was going to stay with us for a couple



weeks. She was so good to us, doing the housework and cooking, and even took over with our baby's nighttime feedings so Lenore and I could get good sleep. And, because she was there to be with Lenore, I was able to leave to go get my mother on the following Saturday. Having a new granddaughter was the greatest joy that she had ever had, and that made Lenore and me both very happy.

Yes, it was on January 20, 1946, that the biggest event of our lives occurred. Little did we know then the blessings she would bring throughout the years to come.

### **Parenthood -- A Brand New Role**

Bringing a baby home from the hospital, and being married to that little one's mother, really gave a whole new set of values to life! It was hard to keep my mind on work -- there was so much I wanted to be doing at home. I was glad I hadn't yet had time to do much to the backyard at our "new home" because it wasn't long before I started planning just where I'd eventually put a swing and monkey bar. That's right, even before Deanna learned to crawl I was getting carried away with ideas!

Lenore loved being a mother! She said she'd always liked playing with dolls when she was a little girl, that she'd sew for them, and talk and sing to them. After Deanna was born, Lenore would tell me that she felt that she, at last, had a "real live Doll" -- one to sew for, to read stories to, and to sing to.

We'd been concerned about how Chips would react to having a new

family member around, since he'd been our "only child" for so long. We were greatly relieved to find that after his curiosity had been satisfied (and had probably decided that the new little noisemaker was here to stay), he immediately assumed the role of her great protector.

The little movie camera that we'd bought in Dallas was soon getting a workout! We even used our combination recorder/phonograph to record our baby's cooing, gurgling and crying! It didn't take us long to become typical parents.

### **Church -- Now and Then**

As I mentioned several pages and chapters ago, when Lenore and I walked out of the church after our wedding, it was almost a literal "walking away from church." Even though we had both grown up in homes where "church on Sunday" was routine, that practice wasn't really compelling to us. I would have had to admit that I'd always attended because it was easier to live with my mother than it would have been otherwise. Lenore said she'd always gone to church because that's what was expected in her household. And she liked getting to be with the kids who became her friends.

After our marriage, we decided it was more important to have our Sundays to relax and do what we wanted to. Almost every Monday my mother would phone to ask where we'd gone to church the day before. I learned to "turn her off" -- mentally; I grew calloused to all of her comments that followed my answer as to why we hadn't gone to church that Sunday. I got pretty good at coming up with excuses.

There were a few exceptions. Mother's Day and Easter. Those were the occasions when we tried to "make it up to Mother" by driving up to Pasadena, picking her up, and taking her to her church -- Immanuel Baptist, the one I had attended with her when we lived at the Holliston House, after my dad had died. Then, a big event was the Easter Sunday after Deanna had been born in January. For some reason that I didn't quite understand, but it seemed to be important to Lenore because of her family's Methodist background, we drove out to Otterbein to the church where we'd met each other, and where we were married. Lenore wanted to have Deanna baptized! Just "sprinkled," of course, which was the custom in that church. That was a big deal for her, and I went along with it. She even made a beautiful new white dress and bonnet for Deanna to wear for that occasion. We took my mother along, and she was really proud to be there among her old friends and show off her new granddaughter.

That took care of our "obligation" until Mother's Day, then that was it until the next year. First, Easter, then Mother's Day.

One or the other of those times, there was a guest speaker at Mother's church -- Dr. Paul Rood. Mother said he was a man who'd known my dad -- as if that was supposed to make some difference.

Dr. Rood was really a good speaker, and during his message he mentioned that two of his sons were pastors -- Rev. Woodrow Rood was the pastor at the First Baptist Church in Montebello! Lenore and I immediately recognized that as being the church where old-time friends of ours attended. (During our teenage years, when we were active in Christian Endeavor, we'd gotten acquainted with Herman and Elva Hosier, who were about the same age we were. Herman sang at our wedding, and when he was older he became a well-known vocalist in various Christian



musical groups. So, of course we knew where they went to church, and who the pastor was there.)

Then, Dr. Rood said that his younger son, Rev. Don Rood, was beginning a new church work in -- of all places! -- Compton! I felt my mother's elbow jab to my ribs for weeks, I'm sure! I knew we shouldn't have agreed to take her to hear Dr. Rood that morning! As far as I was concerned, that was going to be the end of trying to appease her! Of course it wasn't: we continued with our same pattern of "church on Easter and Mother's Day."

### **Our Extended Family**

Since I'd never had any relatives around, except my parents, Lenore and I were so glad that Alyce and Henry Yakel, Lenore's older sister and her husband, had moved to Montebello from Santa Maria soon after we'd been married. By the time Deanna was born, Carolyn and Lynn, the Yakels' two kids, were in their late teens. Having a "family" was great!

And another thing that I've mentioned before is the fact that Alyce was seventeen years older than Lenore, so she seemed almost like a mother to her and a grandmother to Deanna. Alyce and Henry's home was the "gathering place" for the family -- any who were around -- not just for holidays, but other times, too. Dad Cain and Fanny, his second wife, would nearly always be there, and my mother was always welcome, too. I'd often drive up to Pasadena to get her, when she felt well enough to be with the others.

Mildred, Lenore's sister who was eleven years older than she was, and her Navy husband, Floyd Gordon, weren't always around at holiday times; but if they were in the area, they were sure to be at the Yakels' with everyone else.

By the time we were living in Compton, Al and Loraine Cain, Lenore's brother and his wife, were living in Larkspur, a little town a few miles north of San Francisco, in Marin County. Al was fifteen years older than Lenore, and not particularly interested in family fun, but they'd often be in the crowd -- at Alyce and Henry's.

And a crowd it would be, since Carolyn and Lynn would usually have boy friends and girl friends with them. It was always fun at Alyce and Henry's. Being an "only child" didn't mean that Deanna lacked "family," even though it was an "extended" family.

Christmases, especially, were always quite an occasion at "Auntie Alyce's and Unca Hooey's" house. After we'd had our own little family's "Santa Claus" gifts at our house, we'd load everything else into the car, and take off for Montebello. That was when "being an only child" was to Deanna's advantage -- there were always gifts from everyone. Her Auntie Alyce and Uncle Henry always thought Deanna was just about "it"; we, her parents, didn't agree -- not much!

THEY THOUGHT  
SHE WAS THE  
GREATEST

#### **Our Friends — Old and New**

With the Selfs living in Lynwood, just a few miles north of where we lived in Compton, and Kemps not too far west in what is now called "South Central" L.A. (the changes in that area don't seem possible!), we

had a lot of good times with all of them, and Deanna loved playing with their kids.

But there was another family that meant much to us -- and still does. The Lohrenzes.

June (McCorkle) Lohrenz and I had ridden the same bus to Puente High School, back in my "Otterbein Days." It was her father who was the pastor of Bell Memorial Church there, even from before the time that I began going out there with my dad on "day trips" from Pasadena. Then, when Mother and I moved out there, after Dad had died, we always went to that church, so I got to know June better. We were just part of the gang. I think it was soon after June's 1937 graduation from high school that her dad was transferred to a church in Selma, California, up somewhere in the Fresno area. That was where June met John Lohrenz, and they were married in June of 1940.

During the war years, John and June moved to Long Beach where he worked in some branch of the defense industry. That's where they were living when Lenore and I moved back from Dallas to California, and I think they'd had their first baby by then. That was Marsha Lohrenz, and a few years later, they had Dwight.

Lenore and June had been really close friends during their teens, so it was great that we could visit back and forth. I really enjoyed John. Of course, I didn't get well acquainted with him until after the war years, and by then he was designing and building racing boats at his own shop in Long Beach. I was intrigued by both his personality and his work, so we hit it off right away. John was nothing short of a mechanical genius. He had had no formal education in the field of mechanical engineering, and such; he just came by it naturally.



In addition to the racing boats, he designed and manufactured a special type of safety helmet for motorcycle riders and race car ~~and boat~~ drivers. He copyrighted "Shoc Shell" as the brand name for the helmets, and they were widely accepted and became very popular. John was always astounding me with the things he would do.

We really enjoyed getting together with the Lohrenzes -- but since John usually worked in his shop six days a week, and I was busy with "projects" at home, the fun times were limited to occasional Sunday afternoons. Lenore and I would have liked to be with them for the whole day, from time to time, but since they always went to Sunday school and church, that limited their time for what we thought would be more fun.

Yes, indeed, we were fortunate to have so many good friends and such a great family.

Bob, please remember  
that I asked you if it  
would be OK to divide  
this into 2 parts. I'd  
like to use the part about  
the little car at the  
time when Deanna was  
a little older. I think it  
can be worked ~~out~~ really  
well. OK?

## Chapter 45 41

### Our "Dream Home"

#### Tackling the "Homework"

I've already mentioned (any number of times!) that when we had bought the Compton house we were aware of a lot of things that needed repairs, and there were some changes we wanted to make -- when we had the time and could afford to do them. Since it was the first home of our own, we took great interest and pride in each thing that we tackled. And, another thing, even though I enjoyed my "real" work very much, and wasn't minding the longer distance from Compton to the North American plant in Inglewood, it was frustrating to only have weekends to work on the projects around our home. I had a hard time establishing priorities on the "homework," and it's been so long ago that I can't really remember the exact sequence in which I tackled them, but I well-remember the fun (and frustrations!) of some of them and I'll try to recall details as best I can.

#### Caution -- Fresh Paint!

One urgent thing requiring my attention was the replacement of the window screens (one in our baby's room had a hole in it and someone had stuffed crumpled paper into it to keep flies out of the house!), and

that meant the frames would have to be painted -- after the old screen had been removed, and before new screen could be put in.

The house was white stucco with dark red trim -- on "decorative" shutters that were on each side of the kitchen window, the front and back doors, and the frames of the window screens. It really looked too "heavy" for such a small house, and we thought yellow would be much more attractive. I decided that since the old screens were going to have to be replaced, it would be a good time to go ahead with getting rid of all of the dark red trim.

That turned out to be a major project! I worked on the screens, one at a time, in the garage at night and on Saturdays -- when I wasn't at my mother's home in Pasadena. When I described the condition of the screen frames, shutters, etc., to the man at the local paint store, he told me that the only way to keep the red from bleeding through the new yellow paint would be by first painting over all of the red with a silver undercoat. That meant that I had to paint all red surfaces twice! It proved to be worth it though, because for as long as we lived in that house we never saw any evidence of the red trying to bleed through.

The operation consisted of, first of all, removing the old screen, then painting the frame with the silver paint; after that coat had dried, I'd apply the yellow coat, then allow that coat to dry. After a frame had been painted with the silver and the yellow coats, and it was all thoroughly dry, I would cut new screen to fit, install it into its frame, then go to the next one. Believe me, that was once I was glad that our first home was a small one with not many windows! Of course, the paint had to be applied to the shutters and the doors before the



newly painted yellow-framed screens could be put back in place, so it wasn't exactly a one-weekend job! Not by a long shot!

Yes, it was a lot of work, but we got great satisfaction out of knowing that we were doing it for ourselves, not a landlord!

### **Bigger 'n Better!**

Another project that we tackled was even bigger! By the time Deanna was old enough to be out in the yard in her baby buggy or play pen, I was once again visualizing the potential for that large back yard -- picnics, a swing, and -- well, the works! We decided that a "real" patio on the south side of the garage should be first. It already had a rather wide cement walkway along that side, and the garage roof extended over it, but just the walk wasn't wide enough for patio furniture. It looked like it would be simple to just make the slab wider, then add a lattice-like covering. A previous owner had set out a wisteria that was really beautiful by the time we came along, and we thought it would be even prettier if it were trained over an open "egg crate" kind of patio cover.

I had never worked cement before, but I was crazy enough to tackle anything. (I'd probably done a lot of reading in "How To" books and magazines!) Lenore, who knew even less than I did about cement work, was to be my helper -- in addition to all of her other "homework."

First of all we had to decide what size the patio should be. Of course it had to be the length of the garage, then we agreed that adding about ten feet in width should be about right. That all figured up to

60' wide  
160' length  
(DEEP)  
Whole  
LOT

approximately 200 square feet of new cement, and it was to be three inches thick.

Next, I put in the forms and dug out the dirt, so then I was ready for the fun to begin. (Where do we go from here?)

One weekend I rented a trailer, then took off to get a load of rock, a couple loads of sand, and several bags of cement, then ran out of weekend! It was hard to wait a whole week before I could get back to my project. That was when I went to the local tool rental place to get the cement-working tools the books said I would need -- trowels, floats, a tamper, etc. While I was there I inquired about the cost of renting a cement mixer. When I found out it would cost \$2.00 a day, I decided that I could save that expense by mixing the cement in the wheelbarrow -- by hand! Once I had all of the equipment and materials rounded up, I was ready for the fun to begin.

I mixed the first wheelbarrow load, using a hoe as a mixing tool, then almost couldn't lift it. (We should have taken movies -- they would have been hilarious!) I finally managed to roll the wheelbarrow over to the corner of the form, the corner we'd agreed would be the "starting place," and there stood faithful Lenore with the tamper in one hand and the trowel in the other, not knowing which was supposed to be used first -- and darned if I knew!

I knew I had to dump that wheelbarrow load before the cement started to set up! Then, as I had seen done by the pro's, I took the tamper from Lenore and started sloshing the broad part of the awkward tool down onto the cement mixture to make sure the rocks were down. Then, with a long plank, I "sawed" across the top of the forms to make the surface level. It was really a big help to have Lenore following me

around like a "tool caddy"; that way I could reach for whatever I thought was needed instead of having to go look for it.

Finally, we stood back and congratulated ourselves as we agreed that the first wheelbarrow load looked pretty good. But, we also agreed that the corner covered by one wheelbarrow-full sure looked small when compared to the whole! We were beginning to find out why Ready Mix trucks do such a good business.

We worked all day -- a very tiring Saturday. Then we worked all the next day -- Sunday. We found out that when you're working cement, everything else stops. Two dollars a day for a mixer was sounding pretty cheap, too.

Finally we dumped our last wheelbarrow load, tamped down the rocks, and "floated" what we could to bring up the water so it could be troweled. We were finally through with the project. Boy, were we tired! It sure wasn't exactly a professionally finished job but, all considered, it didn't look too bad.

After a few days for "setting" I removed the forms. Next, I got started working on the "egg crate" overhead (we wanted all the sun that we could get to shine through), and I painted it white.

We could hardly wait for the paint to dry so we could start training the wisteria to climb over it. I refinished a redwood picnic table and two benches that had been left by the previous owner, and we bought a couple inexpensive bent-willow chairs. Lenore added the "finishing touch" by sewing some yellow (to match the house trim, of course!) cushion-like pads for the furniture. Our patio looked pretty nice, and we really got a lot of use out of it during the years we lived in Compton.



## The Neighborhood Playground

I was really on a roll! I liked "projects" (and still do), so the time came when I launched forth into building just about the finest sand box that any kid ever had. Of course Deanna had a little more growing to do before she'd be playing in it, but I wanted to have it ready for her.

Naturally I had to go at it with an engineer's approach -- the drawing board, first! The finished masterpiece was about four-by-six feet, and probably a foot deep. It was elevated off the ground a few inches with short legs -- I thought that would be the best way to try to keep the sand as dry as possible. (It wasn't until it was finished and ready for use that I found out that neighborhood cats made a removable canvas nighttime covering mandatory!) Even though I intended to keep the depth of the sand to only three or four inches, I still went ahead and reinforced the bottom so it would support the weight of the sand, plus who knew how many kids. Next, I took diagonal cuts across a piece of one-by-twelve to make seats for each of the four corners.

When the carpentry part of it was all done, I painted it to match the house -- the big "boxy" part was white, and the four seats were yellow, like the shutters and screen frames on the house.

There was a good spot for it -- just outside the back door where Lenore could glance at it from the kitchen window to be sure our little girl at play was all right. I can remember seeing as many as four little girls playing and laughing together in that sand box -- all at one time. Along with Deanna, it might have been Judy McLain and Sherry

Marshall from across the street; often, Dorothy Kemp would bring their little Carolyn to play (Carolyn had been born exactly two weeks to the day after Deanna was born); or maybe it would have been a time that Kathleen Self would have been at our house with her mother, Pauline.

(Sandy Fluke lived in the house next door to us, on the north, but she was quite a bit younger than Deanna, so it was a while before she was old enough to come over to play in our yard. And, while telling about the neighbors, I'll mention that Doris and Louie Crone, an older couple, lived in the house south of ours. They didn't have children, but they had "Mac," a cute Dachshund that both Chips and Deanna enjoyed -- from our side of the white picket fence that separated our properties.)

After the sand box, and after considerably more landscaping in the backyard, and after Deanna was a little older, a swing and a monkey bar made our backyard a more complete "neighborhood playground." Even though she was an only child, she had a very enjoyable childhood. In some situations she could have been very lonely, but there in that Compton neighborhood Deanna was never at a loss for someone to play with. Our yard became the congregating spot for the kids, and that was fine with us -- just as long as they remembered to close the gate across the driveway so Chips couldn't get out.

Yes, indeed, those were happy years on Butler Avenue, in Compton -- our home when Deanna was born, learned to walk, and started to school: days of change, days that so quickly turned into years.

## Chapter 46 42

### Life-Changing Events

As so often happens in "real life," just when things in general seemed to be going along smoothly for us, there were experiences ahead that we would not have wanted, if we'd had any say in the matters. And, as usually is the case in "real life," it's much easier to recognize the reasons for those circumstances when we get to the place that we can look back.

### Heavy Hearts for the Cains

Sometime during late 1947 or early 1948, a lot of things took a sudden change. Lenore's dad had a heart attack, and Fannie had decided that she couldn't handle all of the responsibility connected with taking care of him, and the sense of isolation that living on the ranch in Brea Canyon had become for her. The family knew that it was no longer a good idea for the two of them to remain on the ranch since Fannie didn't drive, and Dad Cain wasn't going to be able to drive anymore. Al and Loraine, Lenore's brother and sister-in-law, told the rest of the family that they'd like to have Dad Cain and Fannie go up to Larkspur (in Marin County, north of San Francisco) to live with them. Even though they both worked in San Francisco, it would be quiet for Fannie and Dad, and Al and Loraine could take care of getting groceries on their way home





Alyce back to Montebello. That was a difficult period of time for the Cain family. And now, it's amazing to look back and see how the Lord used all of those circumstances in Lenore's and my personal lives!

Since Lenore and Deanna were necessarily going to be away from our home in Compton for an indefinite period of time, I (reluctantly!) asked my mother if she would like to come to our home in Compton to "keep house" for me.

She was delighted! I wasn't. But it was the best way that Lenore and I could figure out for getting my laundry done and having dinner ready when I got home from work. Worst of all, I knew Mother would insist on being taken to church -- every Sunday!

That's exactly how it happened. And, of course, she remembered about the "young Pastor Rood who was getting a new church started in Compton."

It wasn't long until in my Sunday afternoon letters to Lenore I was telling her that I had taken Mother to church that morning, and that Pastor Don Rood was really a fairly interesting preacher, and there were several couples our age in that little church. Maybe she'd like to visit there, too, after she and Deanna were back home.

Dad Cain passed away in a San Francisco hospital on April 25, 1948. That was really a sad time for the family. The funeral was at a chapel in Montebello, and he was buried beside Lenore's mother in Rose Hills Memorial Park, near Whittier.

It was a low point in our lives, and Lenore said she felt like she'd like to go to the new church I'd told her about. I understood how she felt, but I wasn't sure about the "church part." But that's the background for the story of our first time, as a family of three, to visit that little church in Compton.

Moving in the  
LITTLE  
CAMPBELL'S  
Union Hall  
Before moving  
to PIONEER  
CLUBHOUSE  
1st Baptist  
Compton  
→

### Starting to "Turn the Corner"

It wasn't really a "church" -- they were meeting in the Carpenters' Union Hall building, but there was a friendly bunch of people there. Don and Bea Rood were a very likeable couple, ones who made you feel as though they had known you for years. They were near our own age, and there were several other couples in that same age bracket, and lots of little kids. Deanna even liked going into the nursery because there <sup>were</sup> children to play with.

We'd intended to go for just a short time, thinking it would help Lenore feel better. When the people found out that her father had recently passed away, they had a nice way of expressing sympathy and concern for us. They were all so friendly, but it bothered us that they spent so much time talking about "the Lord." Being with them on Sunday mornings was much different from the Saturday night bunch that we had been together with for some time! We seemed to stick around for much longer than we'd intended.

That small congregation grew until a larger place to meet was needed. One Sunday it was announced that the next Sunday the church would be meeting in the Pathfinder Clubhouse, still in Compton. It turned out to be a hall that could seat about 200 people, and there were rooms that could be used for Sunday school classes. It wasn't long until the congregation was growing by "leaps and bounds," under the ministry of Don Rood, and it adopted the name "Immanuel Baptist Church," just like the church in Pasadena! It was obvious that the blessing of the Lord was upon this small congregation.



At the close of each service, Don never failed to give an invitation for salvation. One morning, in the spring of 1949, Lenore responded. In spite of my whispering to her that "she was going to make a fool of herself," she went forward. Not long after that, she was baptized (by immersion!).

Even though I had been baptized in the Baptist church when I was just a boy, I was not about to publicly profess Christ as my Savior. Furthermore, Don would not accept anyone for church membership who had not had a born-again experience (which I secretly knew was scripturally correct). So, for more than a year I fought against the obvious changes I could see taking place in Lenore's life, and the difference between the lives of our new church friends, and mine.

To add to my discomfort, there was a daily Bible study meeting in one of the conference rooms, during the lunch hour at work. I had been invited numerous times, but always refused to go. There were a couple of guys whom I worked with in Confidential Engineering that were regular attenders. I know I've already mentioned their names, but I'll do so again -- Charlie White, a hydraulics specialist, and Henry Carlisle, a power plant engineer.

Any number of times, these two guys had asked me to come to the Bible study, and I had always managed to brush them off. Why mess up a lunch hour that way, when I'd rather play cards with another bunch of guys! They wouldn't get off my back! Finally, they were telling me that I really should hear Harry Johnson, an engineer in another department, who was speaking about current events as they related to Scripture.

I couldn't really figure out why Charlie and Henry thought I'd be

interested in that, but I finally agreed to go with them. Was I ever surprised to see how many people were there, and who some of them were! Two guys, Dub Rouse and Leonard Giesert, had been in my department in Dallas! I think they were as surprised to see me as I was to see them!

Harry Johnson was speaking on prophecy. It was in the months <sup>PRECEDING</sup> following when, for the first time in centuries, Israel had again become a nation (1948), and the "desert was blooming like a rose." I didn't realize that was a prophetic quotation from the Bible, but Harry was really making it come alive! I had to admit that I enjoyed it!

And so it went. I kept going to the noontime Bible classes at work, and we kept going to Immanuel Baptist Church. Somehow, it was seeming right to have Deanna in Sunday school -- she was almost four years old by then, and she really loved going; there were lots of kids her age, and she had fun with them. We went to picnics and potluck suppers, and most anything else that was going on for the church people.

#### The Summer of 1950

*What a hallowed, sacred time that was!*

How well I remember. It was in the summer of 1950 that I took a week of my vacation time to paint the outside of our house. One of the guys who rode in our carpool had given me a formula for making white paint, a mixture that he claimed would outlast the best of commercial paints. The house really needed painting, and we'd been wanting to change the color of the shutters, but the cost of paint had been a problem for us. This concoction was going to be a fraction of the cost of regular paint, about ten dollars for the whole "recipe," so

adventurous me had decided to give it a try. I can't remember now what all was involved, but I do recall that unslacked lime, along with a whitener, were the principal ingredients. I got a 50-gallon drum to mix it in, put all of the stuff where I could pull the garden hose up close, and away I went. I finally got it all mixed together, then had to let it sit for a day or two; then it had to be stirred again! When it got too thick, I had been told to just add more water.

Finally, it was ready for me to go at it. I was dubious at first, but was pleasantly surprised to find out that it did go on easily and smoothly -- both with a brush and a roller. And the best part was that the price couldn't be beat!

As I painted away, I began to realize that I was subconsciously thanking the Lord for the abundance of blessings that we had received lately. Finally, the thoughts were overwhelming and I knew I was under deep conviction!

On that particular day, June 19th, 1950, Lenore had gone to the market, or somewhere, and had taken Deanna with her, and I was at home alone. I laid the paintbrush across the top of the bucket, got down off the ladder, went into the house and knelt down by the couch in the living room. That was when I asked the Lord's forgiveness of sin, to come into my life, and take over.

Then, I went back outdoors to the ladder, climbed up, and resumed painting. I heard no bells ringing and saw no lights flashing, but I knew within that a change had taken place in my life. I didn't tell Lenore about it right away, but one day she told me that I "seemed different." It was then that I told her about the decision I had made. It was a wonderful day when Lenore and I together became members of Immanuel Baptist Church.



Oh, the house painting got finished. In fact, I had so much white paint that I went over the house two times, and still had enough left over to give to the guy next door. Finally, with the trim of yellow screen frames and shutters, the house really looked nice.

Yes, the summer of 1950 was when I renewed our house on the outside, and it was when I let the Lord begin His work inside of me.

### **Troubled Waters**

I wish I could say that it was "smooth sailing" for our little family after I'd made my decision for Christ, but it took a while for our "new lives" to level out. As I've already said, I didn't tell Lenore right away, but the noontime Bible classes at work were really getting to me, and it was becoming more and more difficult for me to be a "silent believer."

One evening when I got home from work, Lenore met me at the front door as always, and kissed me "hello." Then she stepped back and really looked me in the eyes and said, "Are you all right? You look different. Are you sick?" I answered with, "No, I'm not sick; I've just decided there are no two ways about this thing. I'm living for Christ -- from here on out." That was when I told her about my earlier decision, and she couldn't believe what she was hearing. She was very happy, to say the least.

Even then, it took us a while to settle into a routine of "family devotions" after our evening meal, and praying "out loud" was hard for each of us. Little by little, we began telling our former friends that

we really weren't interested in continuing with our Saturday night poker games, dancing, and other things. They all thought we'd flipped. When we tried to tell them that we were now Christians, they weren't interested in what we were saying. Maybe we went at it all wrong, but we did the best we knew how. Sure enough, we didn't have to "give up our old friends"; instead, they gave us up.

It was in 1950 that we became members of Immanuel Baptist Church, in Compton, together. (Lenore wouldn't join earlier, she'd kept hoping that someday we could join together!)

We soon began to realize there was a decided difference in our new church friends, and we looked forward to the Bible studies, church picnics and potluck suppers. Also, we began visiting back and forth with some of the families of the Christian guys I'd gotten acquainted with at work. It didn't happen all at once, but our new life was beginning to shape up.

But things got all stirred up for us!

Pastor Don Rood was an excellent preacher, we thought. He strongly stressed the need of salvation through a born-again experience, and never failed to give an invitation at the close of each service. Many were responding -- in fact, that little church was experiencing a real revival among the people who were already in the church!

Lenore and I hadn't known there were people within the church who were not happy with the evangelical emphasis. Nor were we aware of the fact that the nucleus of that congregation had split off from a long-time, larger church, right there in Compton, so they could "start a church of their own, and run it their way." Well, they hadn't really thoroughly investigated the Christian convictions of Don Rood before calling him to be their pastor.

The "midnight phone calls" began! Here we were, brand new Christians, and wondering what all the fuss was about. We were urged to "go to meetings"; we didn't, but we found out about them later. The "old-timers" met with Don and told him of their feelings. Don, very wisely, told them that that was the way he felt the Lord would have him preach, and if that was really the way they felt about it, instead of making any trouble he would resign. They accepted his resignation.

Don and Bea, his wife, felt a real concern for those of us who had recently become Christians; they feared that the "powers that be" would call a liberal minister to that church, and that we might "fall away." The Roods made a point of visiting with each of the couples to tell them what could happen. They gave us a set of guidelines to follow after a new minister was in the pulpit. They advised us to pray about it, to listen carefully to determine if the sermons were truly from the Word, and if there was an obvious burden for the lost. They told us that "if we ever felt led to make a change" there was a church in Huntington Park that they knew to be a solid evangelical ministry. That was Grace Church of Huntington Park; the pastor was Wilbur Nelson. We had already heard about their well-known radio program, "The Morning Chapel Hour."

(There's something else that I want to mention at this point, even though it doesn't pertain to the matter I'm telling about. Before I became a Christian, of course Don Rood knew of Lenore's concern for me. There was a time that he stopped by our house to tell us that he'd just attended a service that was for pastors of the greater Los Angeles area, and that he'd heard a young man whom he felt the Lord was going to use in "some mighty way" in the future. He said that he was going to be speaking at a public rally in Long Beach the next Sunday morning, and he



thought we would enjoy hearing him, even though it would mean we'd have to miss the Sunday service at Immanuel Baptist. Lenore and I did go to that Sunday morning service at the old Long Beach Municipal Auditorium, and I'm sure the message we heard was used by the Lord in my own life. The young man's name was Billy Graham, and that was some time before his first large Crusade. That now-famous Crusade was held late in the summer of 1949, in a large tent at the corner of Washington and Hill Streets, in Los Angeles.)

Now, I'll continue with my story.

#### **Our Good Foundation**

Sure enough, it wasn't long after Don and Bea Rood had left, and after we'd listened to the new pastor a few Sundays, and had some private discussions with him, that we felt led to visit Grace Church. That was probably the first "major thing" that we'd prayed about together, but the Lord really seemed to direct us in making that change. It was a rather long way up to Huntington Park from Compton, but the spiritual blessings far outweighed the greater distance. It was early in the Spring of 1951 that we became members there.

As it turned out, we sort of "led the pack": It wasn't long until Dorothy and Bill Willis, and their kids, showed up at Grace Church; then Terry Pigott and Maureen, her little daughter, always rode with us from Compton on the Sundays when Ted was out of town because of his job with the railroad. Tom and Ella Hardy, and their boys, went there, too, but they may have already been in that church -- I don't remember for sure.

There were probably some others, too, but those are the ones that come to mind just now, and they are ones that I know Deanna remembers well.

There were so many blessings from the Lord because of that change to Grace Church! Bill Miller was the assistant pastor, and in another year or so he married Ruth whom he'd met while he was attending Fuller Seminary -- Ruth was a librarian there.

Grace Church is where we met the Roths; Glenn taught the adult class for our age-level, and Marian was very active in the Women's Missionary work. The Roth family have been very close life-long friends of ours, and during their "growing up years," Deanna and their kids, Dave, Steve and Marilee, were like brothers and sisters.

Our awareness of missions, and missionaries, was nurtured through our close association with Nate and Marj Saint who were home on furlough when we began attending Grace Church, and they were in that same Sunday school class. They were missionaries with Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF), and their field was Ecuador. Our friendship with them picked up where it had left off, each time they came back on furlough. Later, we got acquainted with Jack and Ruth Buck when they came home on furlough from Indonesia. They were missionaries under Go-Ye-Fellowship, but were members of Grace Church.

We became very active in that church -- eventually I was on the deacon board, and also served as Sunday school superintendent. I really liked that because it meant working closely together with Bill Miller. Also, I enjoyed being in the choir -- the director was Bob Beckendorf. He and his wife, Elsa, had been professional concert vocalists before they became Christians, but not long after they were saved they gave up that life to go into full-time service for the Lord. They had two

daughters, Sharon and "Little" Elsa, and Deanna really enjoyed being with them. Bob and Elsa's little Billy wasn't born until after we'd known them for a while.

Then there were the Bignells, Doris Thompson, the Bickels, the Campbells, the Odells, the McCormacks, the Hardys, the Bengstons, and many others who became influential in our early years as Christians.

Our first time to attend a summer conference at Forest Home was with the Grace Church bunch. They'd arranged to use the section of Forest Home that is now known as "Creekside," but back in that summer of 1951 it was called "Pine Cliff." (That section of Forest Home Christian Conference Center has had several names through the years: The Ranch, Lost Creek Ranch, but, as I've already mentioned, it is now Creekside.)

What fond memories we have of Grace Church. The old building was taken down many years ago, and Wilbur Nelson moved the ministry to Paramount. The Morning Chapel Hour broadcast celebrated its fiftieth anniversary several years ago, and as far as I know, it is still being carried on by Wilbur and Ethyl's son, Norman.

Those years at Grace Church were "growing years" for all three of us, and friendships made there were enduring ones.



## Chapter 43

### Getting on with Life -- the New One

#### School Days -- for Deanna

Deanna thought September, in 1950, would never come! She was really looking forward to starting to school. Incidentally, in the state of California, 1950 was the last year that kids could start ~~to~~ school if they were not going to be five until the next March 1st; in 1951 the new students had to have their fifth birthday by December 1st, in order to start ~~to~~ kindergarten in September. So she got in under the wire. It was a good thing -- her mother and I think she would have exploded if she'd had to wait one more year!

Even as it was, she'd been so lonely after Judy McLain and Sharon Marshall had started ~~to~~ kindergarten in 1949, that we enrolled her in a private half-day pre-school for three days a week, just so she'd have kids to play with. But, at last! it was her turn for "real" school!

Lenore had made Deanna a new red dress for her first day of school, and she looked so cute! (I stayed home from work to take movies of the big event!) Our little home on Butler Avenue, in Compton, was about half-a-mile from Theodore Roosevelt Elementary school, and Lenore was going to walk there with her on that first day.

At the time of pre-registration, Lenore had received a printed paper that had specified that a resting mat would be a "pre-requisite" for kindergartners. So, since she loved to sew, Lenore had made a mat

and tote bag of matching fabric, and Deanna proudly "toted" it as she excitedly hurried her mother along for that walk to school on her first day. I followed at a little distance -- taking movies all the way!

Mrs. Magner, her first teacher, was standing at the door of the kindergarten classroom, and she greeted Deanna as she walked in. Well, she almost ran in! She could hardly wait to get with all of the other kids. Lenore was the tearful one, as she and I walked back home together. Of course I drove on over to Inglewood for work then, but at different times during the day I'd catch myself wondering how our "school girl" was doing. I was glad that Lenore had planned to go back to the school to meet her after the morning school session, and to walk home with her on that first day. And I was also glad when it was finally time for me to go home -- so I could get a full report.

Deanna continued attending Theodore Roosevelt Elementary school until we moved in 1954 . . . but that's for later on in my story.

### **We "Got the Picture"**

It was in the early 1950s when television began to be the rage! In almost any town, you could walk down the street and see people congregated on the sidewalk in front of a store window to watch Milton Berle, Arthur Godfrey, or some other early star, on a television screen! It was almost unbelievable! I could remember back to when there'd be a bunch of people clustered somewhere -- to listen to a radio!

Several of our friends were getting television sets of their own, and Deanna's little friends were talking about the episodes of "Beanie,"

"Kukla, Fran and Ollie," "Engineer Bill," and any number of other kid shows. So . . . "Daddy, how come we don't have a television?"

I began watching the newspaper ads, but I thought the prices were "out of sight" for what you'd get. A 10- or 12-inch screen set was over \$200.00, and that was a lot of money in those days! (Black and white, of course; color TV hadn't been developed yet.)

One day I saw an ad for a TV kit, and boy! did that spark my interest. The ad said it was "a complete kit for a 10-inch television, plus free balancing and alignment." That service had to be done with an oscilloscope, an instrument that the average person would not have, so they were offering to do it for you after you had completed assembling the parts. The whole thing was advertised to be "under \$130.00," still a lot of money, but it was considerably less than \$200.00 for a "ready to go" set -- and I'd have the fun of putting it together!

It was a "Trans-Vision" kit, and was sold with several guarantees -- one on the picture tube and one on the tuner, guaranteeing "replacements -- if found to be faulty." I think I remember that they even threw in a free soldering iron and the solder! How could I go wrong?

Lenore and I talked about it, and she had no trouble seeing that I could hardly wait to get going on the project. So the first chance I got, I was on my way to a place in L.A. where they were being sold. I was surprised to see what a large box it came in . . . big enough to accommodate the picture tube, a 10-inch diagonal tube "face" with a "neck" about two-feet in length. Wow!

A year, or so, before this venture, I'd built a dark room off of the back of the garage, and had been using it quite steadily for photo



developing. I knew that little dark room would be a wonderful place to work on assembling our new toy! Suddenly I was a boy again -- putting together a little one-tube radio receiver in the garage of the Holliston House, in Pasadena. Only this time I "set up shop" in the dark room in back of the garage at our Butler Avenue home, in Compton. The carton that I'd brought home from L.A. was almost too big to get through the door, and into that little dark room!

It was really fun to open that box and get out all of the parts and the Instruction Manual! All the components were color-coded and numbered, and the book was well-detailed. I could hardly wait to get home from work, hurry through supper, then get out to my project. I remember that I kept track of my hours, and if I remember correctly it took about forty hours to complete the assembling.

I looked it over carefully, even did some meter checking for continuity, and when I was satisfied that everything seemed OK, I waited until the next Saturday rolled around and took it back into L.A. for the 'scope check. I remember how impatient I was when I found out that it was going to be a couple of hours before they could <sup>do the check,</sup> ~~get onto nine,~~ but finally they were finished with it, and off I went for home! <sup>to start the assembly.</sup>

~~Everything at home was all set for it, since I had already put up~~

~~the outside antenna as a part of the "Advance model". So, when I got~~

~~home with my prized possession I connected the antenna lead, plugged~~

~~it into the electrical power, turned on the tuner, and I was ready to~~

~~watch the first picture develop on the screen~~

~~for the very first time! I turned the tuner knob to the various~~

~~channels, and all worked well.~~

We had a happy little girl when she could watch Beanie and the Mouseketeers on our own TV!

After 50  
GPA was  
Home &  
Assembled  
TOOK 40 HRS  
After 50  
GPA was  
STRAIGHT  
AWAY  
How to  
Solve  
Problems

Rewrite on page 273

I borrowed a soldering iron from the next door neighbor which proved to be too big so had to get a smaller one which worked out fine.

The plans were well laid out and easy to follow and in about 40, or so hours it was all ready for a final check out and then for the big thrill it was to watch a picture develop on the screen for the very first time! I turned the tuner knob to the various channels and all worked well. — what fun!

But I had also created a problem. The novelty of having a TV soon became, "Gosh, that thing's ugly!" and I had to agree. While Deanna had a TV to watch in our own home, we were also the only people she knew who had a "naked" TV. Here it was in our living room -- with "no clothes on" (no cabinet)! Something had to be done about that!

I had an idea, so I checked out Lynwood High School and found that they offered night classes for adults, and among the various classes was one in woodshop. I couldn't enroll fast enough! It was there that I built a solid black walnut cabinet for the TV. It really turned out very well, and was quite elaborate. I'd designed the cabinet with doors for the TV compartment, and beneath that was a roll-out drawer for the combination radio, record player and recorder -- the one that had been our first major purchase after we were married.

After I had completed the work on the cabinet, I had the wood treated and finished by a professional. It really looked great, and I was so proud of it. Instead of being an "eyesore," our TV was now a beautiful piece of furniture. We got lots of compliments on it, and we enjoyed it for several years. We even took pictures of it, and I'll include a few of them on a picture page in this book.

#### **More About the Lohrenzes**

I've already written quite a bit about John and June Lohrenz, but I still have a lot more to relate about them. As I've said, we always enjoyed being together with them, but our times with them were even better -- after Lenore and I had become Christians. Now, the Sunday



afternoon get-togethers were often extended into the evenings because we'd stay longer, and go to their church with them. It seemed like "old times" for Lenore and me to be in church with June -- she played the piano in their Long Beach church, just like she'd done for our youth group meetings when we were kids, at the church in Otterbein.

Deanna was always so glad when the two families of us would get together, and she could play with Marsha and Dwight (she was in the middle, age-wise). After the kids were older, and when the Lohrenzes would be at our house, they'd play croquet in our ~~back~~ big back yard. It was during those years that our long-time tradition of Fourth of July -- and fireworks -- at the Lorhenzes' was established. That tradition lasted until the kids were in college!

I know I've already said that John was always astounding me with the things he would do; well, one of those "astounding things" was a little car that he made for his little boy -- Dwight was probably around five years old, then. I seem to remember that even before the car, he'd made a tractor for Dwight. It had a little motor in it, and he'd drive it down the sidewalk, alongside their residential property in Long Beach. Of course, John was right there with him, and Dwight "knew the rules" to follow.

But that little car was something else! It was just the right size for Dwight to drive, and take along another little kid as his passenger. John had made the body by making a multi-stage mold (probably more than one, until he got it perfected). Then, he did a fiberglass layup, using several layers of fiberglass -- similar to the technique that Chevrolet uses to make bodies for their Corvettes.

John designed a rack and pinion type steering, and a transmission

with a pressure-type clutch to drive the front wheels. The power source was a Briggs-Stratton lawnmower engine. He painted the car with a cream color enamel, and painted the "Shoc Shell" logo and name on each side. That little car was indeed a crowd-stopper -- not to mention that it was good advertising for his line of safety helmets when he'd park it in the concessions areas at auto races and motorcycle club meets.

That little car was an added reason that Deanna loved going to their house! I'd help John run the car up into his truck, then we'd all follow him in our car, and wind up at the empty end of the parking lot down at the Marine Stadium, in Long Beach. When the little car was unloaded from the truck and John had gotten the motor started, Dwight would get into the driver's seat, and Deanna would scramble into the passenger seat -- and off they'd go! (Marsha had ridden in the car so much that she never fussed about having to stand on the sidelines with the rest of us "spectators.")

I almost forgot to mention that John had rigged up a battery powered "traffic signal," and, again, Dwight knew the "rules of the road." John would stand beside that "traffic light" and flip the switch. Green: "Okay to start driving." Yellow meant, "Caution, you're going too fast, slow it down!" Red: "Come in for a stop -- next time around." Dwight complied! That little movie camera that we'd bought in Dallas got put to good use at those times, and we're so glad that we still have some of those old movies.

While on the subject of the Lohrenz family, I'll jump ahead a few years and mention that sometime in the early fifties they bought quite a large acreage in the hills out east of the Tustin area. John designed and built their beautiful home, then built a large, complete shop behind

the garage, and continued with his manufacturing there. Also, he designed and built a medical rescue sphere -- a large, enclosed fiberglass "ball" that was outfitted with a stretcher for a patient, and space for an attending paramedic. It was designed to be lifted and transported by a helicopter, and John knew the spherical shape would prevent excessive air drag while it was being transported. The pilot was to hover over the scene of an accident so rescue workers could load a victim into the "ball," then complete the airlift to a hospital.

A lot of John's technical interests were instilled in his son. Dwight served as an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam war, and that seemed to have triggered his interest in becoming a civilian emergency medical helicopter pilot after the war.

Well, I've really gotten carried away with telling about my very good friend, John Lohrenz. We were all saddened when he was seriously injured in an automobile accident one day when he was driving from Orange County to their ranch property south of Hemet. John could no longer carry on with all of his ingenious pursuits during his remaining years of life. He wasn't able to follow through with demonstrations of the emergency medical sphere that were prerequisites to applying for patents and copyrights. John passed away in 1986, but we are still enjoying our friendship with June, and the rest of their family.

Now, on to other things that I want to tell about.



## A Memorable Christmas

Christmas of 1953 was a memorable one for Deanna! For months she had been talking about all of her friends having bikes: "Judy (McLain) has one, 'this kid' has one, 'that kid' has one . . . why can't I have one?" Poor child. No bike!

She knew the agreement -- we'd told her that we didn't want her to have a bike before she was eight years old, and that was that. Soon after her seventh birthday, she started the countdown: "Well, I'm almost eight." "Yeah, but 'almost' isn't good enough!"

Along with reminders about her age, she was specifying exactly what it was to be like: blue and cream color! No other color combination would do! There were some other "specifics," but I don't remember the added details -- just the "blue and cream," nothing else would do!

Lenore and I had agreed that since Deanna would have her eighth birthday less than a month after that Christmas in '53, we'd go ahead with looking around, and try to get the bicycle as a Christmas surprise. I think I was almost as excited as Deanna because I kept remembering when I got my first bicycle, and how thrilled I had been.

I found exactly what she wanted at the Schwinn bicycle store on Atlantic Blvd., just north of where we lived. It was still a couple months, or so, until Christmas, but I didn't want to take any chances, so I paid a deposit, and had them hold it in layaway.

Deanna kept talking about the bike she wanted; I'd tell her that I'd start looking for one soon. Later, I asked her if red and cream would be okay, if I couldn't find blue and cream. No, absolutely not!

Next time around, I'd remind her that it was still a while before she'd be eight. I kept it up, and so did she! I think she was about to give up on her ol' dad.

The day before Christmas, Lenore must have walked somewhere with Deanna so I could use our one and only car to go over to the Schwinn shop to pay the balance on the bike, take it home, and get it well-hidden in my little darkroom behind the garage. It had to stay out of sight until Christmas morning!

After Deanna was in bed and sound asleep on Christmas Eve, Lenore and I got busy! We arranged the gifts on the floor around the Christmas tree so there'd be room for the bike right in front. I set up a couple flood lights, so the "stage" would be all set for our trusty little movie camera, then shut the door from the living room into the hall, and went to bed. (I doubt if either of us slept very much that night!)

When Deanna was awake on Christmas morning, Lenore hurried in to tell her that she could not open the door into the living room until we called to her that we were ready for her (I had to get the flood lights turned on, and wind up the spring on the movie camera -- I wanted to record her first expression when she opened the door!). Finally, we called "OKAY!" to her, and . . . well, our old movies show it all!

Deanna didn't know there were any other gifts, toys, clothes, or anything else under the tree. She was so thrilled that she didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She was one happy little girl! She didn't take her eyes off the bike during the time we followed our custom of reading the Christmas story from the Bible and having prayer, before opening gifts. (I'm sure the gift opening was skipped for a while!) She gulped down a quick breakfast, then hurried with getting out of her robe and nightie, and into her clothes.

"Daddy, please help me get my new bicycle out of the door! I've got to go show it to Judy!" (It was good that she'd ridden other kids' bikes from time to time, with our permission, so we didn't have to go through the training wheels stage.)

I grabbed the movie camera so I could follow her, and she was off to Judy's house! Just as soon as Judy came to the back door of their house, she ran for her bike, too, and the two little girls took off down the street together! What a precious time that was.

I don't remember how we managed to get Deanna off of her bike so we could go to Alyce and Henry's for our traditional family Christmas, and I'm sure we were late getting there. She was one excited little girl.

#### **A Change for the Honline Family**

It was probably early in 1954 that Lenore and I began talking about the possibility of making a move. We were feeling the squeeze of the small house (about 900 sq. ft.) and its two small closets -- one in each of the bedrooms. Deanna's supply (and size) of clothes was growing, just like she was, and our closet had been jam-packed from the very beginning. We didn't really know just where to look -- the newer neighborhoods were being developed farther east, and that would mean a longer drive to work for me, and probably add a few miles for our drive to the church in Huntington Park. But from time to time on Sunday afternoons we'd drive around and look. We knew a larger house would cost more, but we felt sure we could get more for our Compton house than we'd paid for it -- after all, it was certainly in better condition than when we'd bought it.



One morning while Deanna was at school, Lenore drove over into the Bellflower area to look around. She got pretty excited about what she saw, and she called me at work to tell me about the models she'd seen in one new subdivision. She described one particular floor plan that was about 1250 sq. ft. (that sounds small now!), and had two bedrooms and a den, one and a half baths, a nice kitchen and laundry room, and a double garage. Then I got excited! A two-car garage! I'd have room for a workbench and some storage cupboards! I was afraid to hear "how much," but the \$12,500.00 that she read to me from the brochure didn't sound too bad. But Bellflower! . . . quite a ways farther to work for me.

When I got home from work that night and looked at the brochure she had, I could see why she was so impressed. I told her we'd go out that weekend and look at the houses together.

We were still fairly new at the business of "praying, and trusting the Lord," but it was amazing how that all worked out for us. It wasn't very many days later that a notice was circulated within engineering asking for the names of those who'd be interested in working on a re-design of the Yaw Dampers (stabilizing surfaces) for the F-100. Included in the circulation was Confidential Engineering because some of us had worked on the preliminary concept of what had been designated as the F-100, and were familiar with the plane. The bottom line pointed out that it would mean having to work at the Downey facility!

The Downey plant was about three miles north of where we'd been looking at those new homes in Bellflower! So, needless to say, I got my name in right away -- even before I called Lenore to tell her about that possibility. She could hardly believe it when I did call to tell her.

I was one of the group accepted, and we were told to report for

work in about two weeks at what was then known as the Aero-Physics Division of North American, on the east side of Lakewood Blvd., just south of Firestone, in Downey. To me, the thrill of a new challenge was very stimulating. Frankly, I was getting a little bored with doing basically the same thing ever since I'd come back from Dallas. Oh yes, I usually found my work to be interesting and challenging, but anything can get tiresome after a while.

But, as "change" began settling into my thoughts, I realized how much I would miss the lunch hour Bible studies. Then there was an added challenge: If the Lord was willing, I would trust Him to help me get one started at the Downey plant.

Those were a lot of decisions in a comparatively short period of time, but I remember that it was on Lenore's birthday, March 6th, that we went over to Bellflower and drove through the tract of new homes one more time. When we were sure of the floor plan and lot that we wanted, we went to the tract sales office to sign the papers, and make the required down payment.

We couldn't advertise our Compton house right away because even though the new house was "under construction," it would be a while before it would be ready. And another thing, Deanna was in the third grade at Theodore Roosevelt school, and we didn't want to uproot her until the school year finished. She was excited about the new house, but she was also reluctant to leave her friends, and the only house that she had known as "home." But then she'd remember that all three of us were looking forward to getting another pet as soon as we could get a new back yard enclosed with a fence. Chips had died a couple years, or so, before, and we were still missing him very much.

When we did put an ad in the Compton newspaper, it didn't take long for the house to sell. I think we were asking around nine thousand for it, and the first man who came to look at it didn't hesitate. He wanted it, and he wanted occupancy on June the first! Quickly, Lenore and I decided that since I was sure I'd have no trouble in getting a ride to work, she could have the car to drive Deanna back and forth to school from Bellflower for just those last two weeks. So we had a deal!

We agreed on a day and time to meet the buyer (we never did know if he had a wife) at the bank that held our mortgage, and that was when it got funny. All of the paper-signing went very smoothly, then the escrow officer asked the buyer if he wanted to assume the balance of our mortgage. He told the lady, "Oh, no, I intend to pay cash." With that, he proceeded to reach into his bulging coat pocket and pull out a paper bag. When he'd said cash, he'd meant cash! He reached across the desk, upended the paper bag, and out rolled paper money and coins like we'd never seen before! The bank lady looked sort of strange, too. She asked the man if she could borrow back his paper bag -- she'd have to take the money to a teller, so she'd have help counting it. That left the buyer, Lenore and me in that little bank cubicle for quite a while -- just trying to find things to talk about to pass the time. Yes, indeed, we'd "made a deal!"

It was probably the last Saturday in May, 1954, that moving day finally came. Deanna was so excited that morning that she kept running out to the street to see if she could see the moving van coming. Yes, a moving van! This time we were going first class! (Lenore and I were probably remembering our first move -- when we'd moved from Culver City to Pasadena for a short time; that was when the man next door helped us



out by using the big Pepsi Cola truck that he drove for work.) Even though we didn't have a lot of furniture to be moved, we did have the old upright piano that had belonged to Lenore's folks, and I'm sure it weighed at least a ton, so we were glad we could use a Mayflower van and two men this time.

Finally the van arrived and the loading got started. It didn't take the men very long, and I think we were on our way by noon, or a little after. By then, all three of us were excited, and looking forward to getting settled in our new home at 9664 Cloverwood Street, in Bellflower.

## PART ELEVEN: THE BELLFLOWER YEARS

1954 - 1963

### Chapter 48 <sup>44</sup>

#### Our First NEW Home

What a difference it was to move into a brand new home! Nothing needed painting right away, and the cupboards were ready for shelf paper. The 1250 sq. ft. of floor space seemed so large that we wondered if we'd ever find use for all of that room. It was our first time to have wall-to-wall carpeting, and we'd been able to choose just what we wanted from a stack of samples in the tract sales office. The kitchen and bathroom counter tile and floor linoleum had been our choices, too. And there was a fireplace in the living room -- a real one! Lenore and Deanna were excited (and so was I!).

Well, so much for the inside; I had my work cut out for me on the outside! We'd known in advance that the tract developer did absolutely nothing as far as landscaping was concerned, front and back, but that was all right with me. I could hardly wait to get started on my brand new project!

Our new home was on the southwest corner of Cloverwood and Charlemagne Streets, so that meant we had a "wrap-around" front yard. The house faced north, onto Cloverwood, but the detached two-car garage faced east, onto Charlemagne. A nice size "breezeway" -- a cement patio that was roofed over, connected the house and garage, and I was anxious to put up a wood fence and gate on the street side so the patio would be enclosed and private.

Fences were not in between properties, so we were glad the neighbors around us all agreed on block walls. We were anxious to get that taken care of so I could start planning the layout of the yards -- front and back. I had all kinds of ideas for them.

I'd never done brick work before, but I was determined to "practice" on that yard. Boy, did I have fun! I put brick planters across the front of the house, and down the east side, the Charlemagne side. Later, low brick planters outlined the back yard, too. I knew what part of the yard I wanted in lawn, so "back to the drawing board" for planning the sprinkler system. Since PVC didn't exist back in the fifties, it had to be made out of galvanized iron pipe. That meant every joint had to be "threaded" to accommodate the various fittings, sprinkler heads, etc. What a job! I was certainly grateful that I could borrow the equipment that I needed to do the necessary cutting and threading of the pipe from the man next door. There was a lot of it to be done -- what a job! But when the sprinkler system was finished, it worked good, and that was the important thing. I just wished I'd had more time to work at it, instead of being limited to weekends and after work on long summer evenings.

We planted dichondra seed instead of "conventional" type of seed. I knew the dichondra would require extra care, but I thought it would be worth it. We set out various shrubs in the planters, and it turned out to be a beautiful yard.

Right at first, Lenore was pretty busy with driving Deanna back and forth for those last two weeks at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, in Compton, but then she had a good time getting things fixed up inside. It wasn't long before our new house was beginning to seem like home.



## Chapter 49 45

### Adjusting and Adapting

Deanna liked the new house, but she missed her old friends -- for a while. Often Lenore would drive <sup>her</sup> ~~Deanna~~ back to Compton so she could spend an afternoon with Judy McLain; other times she'd go over in the morning to pick up Judy, so she could come to Bellflower to visit for the day. (Judy's mom didn't drive, but Lenore never objected to running "taxi service.") By then, Sharon Marshall's family had moved to Palos Verdes, so Judy was lonesome, too.

But it wasn't too long until Deanna's blue and cream Schwinn bike was getting a real workout -- right there in our new neighborhood -- as she got acquainted with the kids who lived nearby. Sharon Gibson, and Marlys (I can't remember her last name, but I do remember that the kids called her "Little Earthquake" -- when she wasn't around to hear them!) lived on Glandon Street, the street south of us; Cheryl Price lived down on the northeast corner of Ardis and Cloverwood, a block west of us; then Johnny Ensign and Don Bruegger were across the street east, on the other side of Charlemagne. Johnny and Don were a little older than the girls, but that didn't seem to make much difference to any of them.

It wasn't long until there were baseball games going on the in cul-de-sac east of our corner, and that was fun for Lenore because she could see the kids playing (and hear them shouting!) if she happened to be at our kitchen window. It was reminiscent of the days when, several years before, she'd watched the little kids in the sandbox -- or on the swing and the monkey bar -- in our back yard, in Compton. As Deanna

grew older, she became really good at swinging the bat and earned the title "Slugger Honline."

We were so glad that she'd had the summertime to get acquainted with kids in the neighborhood because Lenore and I knew it would be very difficult for her to go to a new school in the fall. In September of 1954, eight-year-old Deanna entered fourth grade at May Thompson Elementary School -- just a few blocks south of where we lived, there in Bellflower. It was a difficult adjustment for her, but she soon adapted very well.

Almost every Friday evening we'd drive east on Rosecrans Avenue to Norwalk Square. We'd have hamburgers at a little restaurant that was on a corner there (I think it was named "Burger Square"), then we'd do some shopping at Penneys, and the other stores that were in that little strip mall. Lakewood Center hadn't been completed when we first moved to Bellflower, but after the large department stores were opened there, that became our frequent Friday evening destination. And going to Pasadena to my mother's place were still frequent Saturday jaunts.

We really enjoyed the large patio at the Bellflower house -- the roofed breezeway area between the house and the garage. It was just the right size for a full-size ping-pong table, and we certainly put that to good use! We had a little barbecue grill out there, too, and often ate our suppers on the patio table -- even if it wasn't a "special occasion." And the backyard was just right for the croquet set that we'd brought along from the Compton home.

From our own childhoods, Lenore and I realized that being an "only child" can have its disadvantages, so we tried the best we could to find fun things to do. (Of course, Lenore wasn't an "only child," but being

the youngest by so many years meant the others were "out of the nest" while she was still very young.)

Going to Forest Home Christian Conference Center each summer for the week-long Family Camp became a tradition, and sometimes Deanna took a girlfriend along. Once in a while we'd drive out to Desert Hot Springs to swim at a very nice public pool that was there, and she'd often take along a friend for times such as those, too. There were even a few trips to San Jacinto! We'd stay overnight at the Hacienda Motel, just so we could swim in their pool! I remember once that we drove out to Hemet and attended the Ramona Pageant at the Ramona Bowl, but I think that was after Deanna was in high school.

When we could manage it we'd take a week, or sometimes two, for summer vacation trips. Two or three times, we drove to Sacramento to visit with Delta and Dorwin Clark, my mother's elderly cousins. Then, I remember one real adventure we had when we drove to Coloma, in the old California "Gold Rush" country north of Placerville. Friends from Grace Church, the Spence family, had moved there, so we went to visit them.

Later, there were some longer trips, and during Deanna's teen years, there were slumber parties and . . . but there I go, getting too far ahead in my story.

We remained very active at Grace Church, in Huntington Park: Lenore was teaching high school Sunday school, and Deanna got to tag along with those "big kids" when Lenore would enlist some other parents to help with the driving, and take the high schoolers to various parks and museums. It kept me pretty busy juggling my work, my church responsibilities, and taking care of the yard -- both ours, and my mother's, but somehow we got it all dove-tailed in. They were busy years, but very happy ones!



## Chapter 30 *WV*

### Work at the Downey Plant

Living in Bellflower was wonderful -- in more ways than one! I couldn't believe that I had such a short distance to commute to work -- never before had we lived that close, and it was great. I'd lined up a ride with a guy who lived just a ways south of us, and west of Clark Avenue, right there in Bellflower. I didn't have him pick me up every day, but it was sure handy to be able to call him when we knew Lenore was going to need our car during any particular day. It couldn't have been better!

The background of North American's occupancy of that Downey facility was very interesting, too. Many years earlier, Vultee Aircraft had established their work in Downey, but in the early 1950s Vultee merged with Consolidated, in San Diego. The new name was Consolidated-Vultee, but later it was changed to Convair. That original Vultee facility on Lakewood Blvd., just a ways south of Firestone, remained vacant for some time. Eventually, when they were needing more space, North American Aviation leased the facility for what was called NAA's Aero-Physics Lab. That division of the company was involved in the early development of the G-26 Navaho missile, and other early missile programs. In addition to the missile work being done there, sometimes other post-production jobs would wind up there. One of those "post-production jobs" was the Yaw Damper problem on the F-100, the project I had been assigned to.

Since we'd been told that we could requisition help from their

engineering departments or groups, I requested a guy who I knew had had a lot of experience in aircraft hydraulics and electronics. His name was Ward Seitz, and even though I hadn't really known him very well, I'd seen him at the noontime Bible Study meetings when I was still at the Inglewood plant.

Ward and I worked together with Flight Test Engineering and their people, including the pilots, until the problem was eventually resolved. But during that period of time, the Lord led in another very important "project."

### **A Noontime Bible Study for the Downey Plant**

As I got to know Ward Seitz better, I found that he was a really fine Christian and was active in the College and Professional Singles Group at Hollywood Presbyterian Church. He and I shared a burden for getting a noontime Bible Study started there in the Downey plant, one that would be patterned something like the one we'd each attended at the Inglewood plant.

After praying about it, Ward and I went to the "top brass" to ask if there would be any objection to having a Bible Study there. We were asked a lot of questions -- we respected the fact that they had to determine that we weren't affiliated with any subversive group, something "way out." After they were satisfied that we weren't plotting to blow up the place, we were given the OK. We were assigned a very nice conference room, and we were even given permission to publicize the activity by posting announcements on the company bulletin boards. (I doubt if that permission would be granted today!)

The Class got off to a good start. To begin with, Ward and I took turns leading the discussions, but the group soon grew to where others were available to join in the leadership. It didn't take us long to realize that we had to establish certain "ground rules" which had to be adhered to. We found out that there were members of various cults and denominations who would attempt to dominate the discussions in an effort to impose their slants and beliefs, but when we insisted that everyone had to stick strictly with what the Word said, those people either dropped out, or their own convictions gradually changed.

The Lord blessed the endeavor, and it wasn't very long before the attendance grew until the room would be nearly filled each day. Many blessings were derived from that noontime Bible Study.



## Chapter 51 47

### An Unexpected Sorrow

Since Mother lived within walking distance of Colorado Boulevard, the route of Pasadena's famous New Year's Rose Parade, we decided to go to her home on New Year's Eve, stay overnight, then the three of us would walk down to Colorado Boulevard so we could see the 1955 Rose Parade in person. Lenore and I were anxious for Deanna to get to see the Parade in "living color," instead of in black and white on our little 10-inch TV screen. Even though Mother wasn't feeling real well, she was very happy to have us there. Of course, that year it rained on the Parade for the first time in years! Fortunately, it didn't rain hard, so we enjoyed it all from under the overhangs of the entryways of the stores and offices that lined Colorado Boulevard. That was fun for us, and it wasn't too difficult for Mother since we'd insisted on a simple breakfast at her home, then we took her out for dinner after the parade. As always, she was sad when it was time for us to leave to go home; she always said how lonely she was after we'd been there to visit.

Mother's 79th birthday would be in just a few weeks, on February 23rd, and Deanna came up with a gift suggestion that she thought would help her grandmother to not be so lonesome. Paul McCormack, a Grace Church friend, was "into" raising parakeets as a hobby, and Deanna had always loved going to their house to see the birds. Too, the Roth family had a parakeet named "Tweetie," and we always enjoyed seeing it do its many tricks. So we decided to pick out a nice cage at the pet shop at Norwalk Square and buy a parakeet from Paul, and have it ready

to give it to Mother for her birthday. We all thought it would be great company for her, and give her a lot of pleasure.

The young bird that Paul picked out was really perky -- in fact, Lenore and I wondered if we'd be able to talk Deanna into letting her grandmother have it. The bright green bird had a little bump on its beak, so Deanna decided it looked like Bill and Ruth Millers' little baby, and its name absolutely had to be "Tommy." (Tommy Miller had been born with a little cyst on the bridge of his nose, but of course it had been removed with a simple surgery.) We assured Deanna that her grandmother would be delighted to know that she'd already chosen a name for her new little feathered companion.

Just a few days before her birthday, Mother phoned to ask if one of us could drive up to Pasadena to take her to the hospital. She told us that she'd been having a lot of pain, so one of her friends had driven her for an appointment with her doctor. The doctor was sure the problem was from her gallbladder, and that it should be removed as soon as possible.

I can't remember which one of us drove up there to take her for admitting, but I well remember that we were both there in the family waiting room on the day of the surgery. After what seemed like an eternity, the surgeon came out to tell us "it wasn't just the gallbladder; instead, it was advanced, inoperable cancer." There was nothing to do except keep her as comfortable as possible. How long? There was no way to know, but we should know then that she would not be returning to her home -- it would just be a matter of time.

We didn't know what to do. What we did do was go in to see her briefly, then tell her she'd have to rest, and "we'll be back tomorrow."

When we left the hospital, we went to a pay phone, looked in the phone book for ~~his~~ number, ~~then called~~ Rev. Jennings<sup>1</sup>, one of the pastors at Immanuel Baptist Church, the one who'd taught the Seniors' Sunday School Class for years, and one who knew my mother very well. He thoughtfully invited Lenore and me to their home for a little while, and it was very comforting to have that time with him and Mrs. Jennings. Rev. Jennings prayed for Mother, and for us in our time of stress, and he assured us that he would visit Mother frequently.

As Lenore and I drove back home to Bellflower, we did a lot of talking. We realized that Mother's little duplex apartment, in the old Victorian residence on Los Robles Avenue, would have to be emptied of her possessions, and that would necessitate Lenore being in Pasadena day after day -- for how long? We didn't know. I knew a guy at work who lived in Pasadena, and drove to the Downey plant every day, but . . . well, we trusted the Lord to help us get it all planned out. Of course, Deanna was in school . . . well, we trusted the Lord -- some more!

Our Grace Church friends (originally from that little Baptist Church in Compton), Bill and Dorothy Willis, lived in Downey, just a few miles north of where we lived. They'd known that we were going to Pasadena for the time Mother would be in surgery, and they got in touch with us as soon as they could -- to find out how everything had gone. When we told them the circumstances, and asked them to pray about it, I don't think they even took time to pray! Immediately, they said that since Bill worked south of where we lived, and worked an early shift, he'd just take a little different route after work, stop by our house, pick up Deanna each day, just as soon as she was out of school, then take her home with him. She loved going to their house to play with



their kids, so we knew she'd not object to that plan. How grateful we were to the Willises for their generous offer of help in our time of need!

Next, I talked to the guy at work and, sure, he'd be glad to take me up to Pasadena each evening after work. And I knew I could ride to work each morning with the fellow who lived over west of Clark Avenue.

Our needs were met! The Lord was faithful!

Every morning, just as soon as Deanna had gone to school, Lenore drove to Mother's place in Pasadena to start her day's work. In the afternoon, she'd take a break to go to the hospital to visit with my mother for a little while. Sometimes the doctor would have left a message for Lenore with the head nurse, so the next day Lenore would go to the hospital in the morning for a conference with the doctor.

The fellow at work would drop me off at my mother's place each evening, Lenore would have a little supper ready for us there, then I'd go to the hospital to see Mother while Lenore finished up the kitchen "chores." When I'd get back to my mother's place, I'd help Lenore with some of the sorting and packing, and deciding what should go to the Salvation Army. We had no concerns about Deanna -- we knew she'd be having a good time with the Willis kids, that she would have supper with their family of five, and that she'd have had her bath.

Finally, it would be time for us to drive back to Downey. We'd tiptoe into Willises' front door around midnight, scoop up our sleeping Deanna from the living room sofa, take her back to her own bed, in her own room, and she wouldn't usually have awakened at all.

Next day: Repeat.

Those were the days when patients were kept in hospitals for

extended periods of time, if necessary, instead of being transferred to nursing homes. It was comforting to us to know that Mother was having the best of care.

Mother passed away on March 16, 1955. It seemed coincidental to me that my dad had passed away on March 14th, 1932, twenty-three years before. Rev. Jennings officiated at a very simple service, and Mother was buried in the grave next to Dad's, in the Mountain View Cemetery, on North Fair Oaks Boulevard, in Altadena, California.

Mother never had the opportunity to enjoy "Tommy," the cute little parakeet, but we enjoyed him for the three or four years of his happy life. Deanna had such fun teaching him several tricks, and something that really amused Lenore was the ruckus that Tommy would raise in his cage -- screeching his funny noise, flapping his wings, and whisking bird seed all over the kitchen floor -- when he'd hear my car rounding the corner, when I'd drive home from work each late afternoon.

Thus ended my Saturday jaunts to Pasadena. We all missed Mother very much; there were many ways in which the Lord had used her life to impact ours. And we've been forever thankful that Deanna had the joy of knowing at least one of her four grandparents.

MANY CARS  
PASSED BY,  
BUT ONLY  
ACTED  
THAT  
WAY  
WHEN HE  
HEARD  
MY  
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## Chapter 52 46

### Major Decisions -- Both Church and School

As Deanna grew older, Lenore and I began to realize that she was needing more involvement in a church-related youth program. We always remembered how much it had meant to us to be "part of the gang" at Bell Memorial Church, in Otterbein. With the distance from Bellflower to Huntington Park being what it was, it just wasn't possible. Also, the youth program in that small church was practically nonexistent. We began praying for the Lord's guidance in our decision-making.

TO BE PART of ALL THE YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Through both Lenore's and my involvement in the Sunday school work at Grace Church, we had been privileged to hear Dr. George Peek at various Greater Los Angeles Sunday School rallies, and were very impressed with his messages. He was the pastor of the Brethren Church, on Orange Avenue, in North Long Beach. That wasn't very far from where we lived in Bellflower, so we visited there a few times.

We checked into the wide scope of their youth activities, and the fact that they had a "Girls' Missionary Guild" was most appealing. Through our friendships with Nate and Marj Saint and Jack and Ruth Buck, Deanna already had acquired an interest in "praying for missionaries." We realized we'd need to be baptized again, since the Brethren denomination practices "trine immersion," but we agreed that we could go along with that. Also, Deanna had not yet been baptized since receiving Christ as her Savior a few years before, so she was pleased to know that all three of us could be baptized as a family.

I don't remember exactly when it was that we made that change --



probably around 1956, or so. We soon made new friends, and Deanna was so glad that she could be involved in things for the kids on more of a regular basis. But, as time went on, Lenore and I realized we could not conscientiously embrace some of the Brethren denomination's practices. Granted, our differences with the Brethren Church lay with some peripheral issues not relevant to salvation. It became more difficult to explain to Deanna why we were deliberately absenting ourselves from the services where foot-washing, a "love feast," and the "Lord's Supper" comprised the Brethren denomination's "triune" communion; and there were some other issues with which we differed.

By that time Deanna had made good friends at the Brethren Church, and probably would protest making another change in our church ties. She was already looking forward to being enrolled in the Brethren Christian school after she'd graduated from sixth grade at the May Thompson public school in June of 1957. Lenore and I were anxious for her to be in a Christian school for her junior and senior high school years, and we knew that Brethren doctrine was not stressed in their schools, but the principles of biblical conduct and morals were strongly adhered to. We knew Deanna would be with a lot of her Brethren Church friends at the school, so we didn't believe the transition would be too difficult for her. It was a hard time for Lenore and me -- we wanted so much to do what we felt would be right for Deanna, so we trusted the Lord in leading in our decisions.

But what about our family's church affiliation? We started visiting around again, from time to time. Lakewood First Baptist Church was known throughout the area as a fundamental ministry -- with a very active youth program. The preaching of Pastor Harold Carlson was solid

-- from the Word, and without compromise; the choir ministry was outstanding; there were kids of all ages, and the church calendar was always filled with various ministries for them. We didn't know what to do -- there we were, struggling with another big decision, but we held steady for a while longer.

At Forest Home's Family Conference, in the summer of 1957, we met the Boze family. Deanna and Mary Margaret Boze became very good friends during that one short week, and Lenore and I really enjoyed Bob and Grace, and their younger daughter Elizabeth. Bob Boze was an officer in the Marines, and they lived at Camp Pendleton, just north of Oceanside. The two families of us visited occasionally, even after that Family Conference, and Deanna and Mary Margaret stayed overnight with each other, from time to time. It was interesting to find out that they were acquainted with the ministry of the Lakewood Church, even though they lived in Oceanside. (I believe it was their Officers' Christian Fellowship chaplain who had been affiliated with that church before he'd become a Military chaplain.)

Sometime in January of 1958, we received a note from the Bozes telling us that their close friends, ones they'd known through Officers' Christian Fellowship, were moving to Bellflower, and that they didn't know anyone there. The young man, a doctor, was going to join the staff of the Bellflower Medical Group; they hoped we could meet them, and help them to feel comfortable in their new community. Grace Boze wrote, "Their names are Dwight and Marilyn Jordan, and they have a little toddler named Valerie." Then she included the address of the apartment the Jordans had rented, and added they didn't yet have a phone number.

That's all Lenore needed. She drove to that address, introduced

herself, and welcomed the Jordan family to Bellflower. As they visited together, Lenore invited them to attend church with us. They accepted for that following Sunday, but also told her that they were looking forward to visiting another church that had been highly recommended to them. It was Lakewood First Baptist!

From the very beginning our friendship with the Jordans was wonderful. Probably one of the most enjoyable times we ever had at Forest Home's Family Conference was the summer that the Roths and the Jordans were there, too. We've had many good laughs while listening to Dwight and Glenn recall their story about the squirrel (they named him "Sam") who played havoc with each couples' sleeping . . . "Sam" spent each night clattering around in the attic of the duplex cottage the Roths and the Jordans shared. They were sure he was bowling with the acorns he'd gathered during the day from Forest Home's abundant supply of oak trees!

It wasn't long after that Family Conference that Lenore, Deanna and I became members of the First Baptist Church of Lakewood, and we were there for many very happy years.

Finally, we had the "right combination." We were involved in the ministry of a very active and fundamental church, and by then Deanna was a junior high student at Brethren School, in Paramount. It was so good to know that we could be enthusiastic about her participation in all of the activities -- both at church and at school. Our main concern was that she was in an environment that would encourage her maturing in her relationship with the Lord.



## Chapter 53.49

### An Unexpected Surprise

It had started out as an ordinary Saturday, but the events of the morning took an unexpected twist. School had ended for summer vacation, in 1957, and Lenore had left for just long enough to drive Deanna to the church -- there was to be an all-day activity for the girls. As the day progressed, we were glad that Deanna wouldn't be home until one of the other mothers would be bringing her back in the late afternoon.

I was trimming shrubbery in the backyard, more specifically, in the planter just around the corner of the house from the breezeway area. All of a sudden out jumped a gray and white cat! From the base of the very shrub I was working on! It almost scared me to death! And from the way the cat ran across the yard and climbed up over the block wall, I think it was equally as scared! It was gone! To make sure it stayed gone, I yanked off my work gloves and slapped them together, and yelled for the cat to "get out!" (I had no soft spot in my heart for cats!)

Just about as soon as I'd resumed my shrub-trimming, I heard a faint "mewing" sound. I got down on my knees, separated the shrubs, and peered under -- there in a "nest" of fallen leaves was a tiny kitten that had obviously been born a very short time before. I didn't know what to do! I considered disposing of the tiny little thing and just say nothing about it. But, somehow, I couldn't bring myself to do that.

— ANOTHER  
WAS  
DEAD

It was at about that point of my deliberating that Lenore drove in. When she walked through the side door of the garage, and into the patio, I called her over to show her the kitten and ask her opinion on the

"subject at hand." We both remembered how Deanna kept clamoring for a pet -- one that could play in the backyard. She was very fond of Tommy, the parakeet, but she'd often say something about him not seeming like a "real" pet. We'd tried another puppy a while before, but its favorite pursuit was to jump as high as it could -- to strip all of the leaves off of our prized camellia plants; in fact, Ginger, the name we'd given to the little terrier, was positively spring-loaded! He was cute, but he was so rambunctious that even Deanna couldn't enjoy him, so I finally managed to give him to one of the men at work. He was sure his kids would like the pup. (He never did give me a satisfactory follow-up report, and I didn't ask questions!)

But a cat! It was still wet, ugly, and so tiny! Its eyes weren't even open, yet. A newborn anything needs its mother! And I had done a thorough job of making sure she was long gone; I'd never seen her before, and had no idea where she lived! Now there were two of us wondering what to do! Lenore said, "I'll go ask Dot. She'll know."

Dot and George Dery, a middle-aged couple, lived in the house next door west of us. George didn't like cats. Dot adored cats. They had a cat! We sometimes wondered just which was Dot's favorite -- her cat, or George. Regardless, at the moment we really needed Dot's advice.

I stayed with the kitten, and Lenore hurried over to talk with Dot. I don't think it was more than thirty seconds until they both came back to where I was standing guard. Dot took one look, and was in her glory! She said she'd go phone her cat's vet -- she was sure he could give her the ingredients for a formula, and she was positive the cat's mother would come back for "night duty," if we'd not disturb the "leaf nest" too much. She told Lenore to go find an eyedropper, and that she'd be back just as soon as she talked with the vet.

By the time Deanna was back home late in the afternoon, we already had a rigid schedule established. "So many drops of formula at very specific intervals." We were really hoping Dot was right about the mother cat reappearing at nightfall! And, of course, Deanna was positively ecstatic!

We'd never have made it if it hadn't been for the attention the mother gave the kitten each night. But just as soon as the mother cat heard any sound in the house in the morning, she was on her way -- at just about the same rate of speed that she'd gone over that block wall that very first morning. It wasn't long until the kitten had "graduated" from the eyedropper to nursing from a doll's bottle that Deanna had stashed away with her toys from earlier years. It was obvious that Deanna was enjoying the whole routine -- almost too much.

Dot came over any number of times each day to check on the "baby's" progress; then there was one Sunday that she was there waiting for us when we got home from church. She told us that the mother cat had "stolen" the baby away, had somehow managed to get it over the block wall, and it was gone when she'd come over to check on it. (There was almost an "how dare you go to church and leave that baby" expression in Dot's eyes!) She said she'd searched the neighborhood, and finally found it in the back yard of a house almost as far down as where the Prices lived. Dot was such a funny little soul, but we really did appreciate her cat expertise.

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There came the day that Dot let us know that it was time to buy some steak for the kitten. She showed Lenore how to scrape it with a spoon, roll the "minced" meat into little pellets, and shove them down the kitten's throat! (I was glad I could "escape" to work each day; those were chores delegated to Lenore and Deanna.)



I kept telling Deanna and Lenore that I'd find a home for the kitten; that I was sure someone at work would want it. Then I'd come home to report that trying to give away a kitten was just about like trying to pass off a good case of measles for someone to take home to their kids.

I was getting desperate! It was about time for us to leave for our planned summer vacation trip to Carlsbad Caverns and Colorado, so we'd have to find a home for the kitten by then. Dot protested with, "You'll not give away that baby! I'll take care of him while you're gone!" She acted as if she would like to help us get packed up -- so she could have full custody of the kitten sooner!

"Okay, I'll find a home for it after we get back from our trip." In just a few more days we were on our way to Colorado, by way of Carlsbad Caverns. I'll give some details about the trip a little later on, for now I'll just say that we all enjoyed that vacation very much, except for the fact that Deanna kept bugging us with, "Can't we phone Dot to find out how the kitten is getting along?"

After a couple weeks, we were back home. We were hardly into the garage before Deanna shot out of the car and went running across the back yard and through the back gate -- to Dot and George's house! Then, at just about the same rate of speed, she came tearing back to Lenore and me. She had a ball of fur in her arms, and Dot was bringing up the rear. "Mom! Daddy! Look!" Deanna was cuddling the cutest little kitten that we'd ever seen! We'd been gone for long enough for its Persian gray "fur coat" to grow and fluff up, and that little kitten's eyes were like big blue saucers. Dot said, "Deanna, put him down on the lawn, and watch him play around your feet." We could hardly believe

what we were seeing -- he looked like a gray fluffball as he started cavorting around our legs! Then, the kitten took off running a little ways. Deanna said, "Look at him scamper around!"

That was exactly the right name for him! "Scamper" was our special pet for the ten or so years that he lived.

## Chapter 54. 60

### From "Lessons" to Driver's License -- for Deanna

Even though I was busy with work, I tried to never be too busy for family good times. I think this episode that I'm about to tell about probably took place when Deanna was around fourteen, or maybe fifteen. She had made a lot of good friends at the Brethren school, and one of those friends was Gail Horn, a girl in her same high school class. On this particular occasion she was over at Gail's home for some reason on a Saturday, and I went over to pick her up in the afternoon.

I should paint a better picture by telling that by the time of this "happening" we were the proud owners of two cars! From time to time, we had talked about getting an older car for me to drive to work so Lenore would have a car at home. One day I'd happened to see a little beige two-door 1950 Plymouth on a lot in Downey. I looked it over good, took it for a test drive, the price sounded right, I thought it would make an excellent second car, so, to make a long story a little shorter, I bought it. It was a stick shift, and Deanna thought it was great! (These days, she'd have thought it was "cool," but this was back before the days of "cool.") Now I'll proceed with my story.

Gail's dad was one of the custodians at Brethren High, and the home provided for Mr. and Mrs. Horn and their daughter was a mobile home on the school property -- just west of the athletic field. To get back to their home, you had to turn off of Paramount Boulevard onto a fairly long driveway that led back along the south side of the field.

When I drove up beside their mobile home, I took the car out of



gear, left the motor running, and went up to the door for just long enough to let Deanna know I was there for her. She thanked the Horns for the good time she'd had, then came on out to the car. She teasingly said, "Let me drive." After I recovered from shock, I looked around and decided there couldn't be a better place for that sort of thing, so I said, "Sure," and moved over to the passenger seat. Then it was her turn for shock recovery! She was as surprised as I'd been!

(Suddenly, I was thinking back over thirty-or-so years to when my dad let me drive our Hudson for the first time.)

Deanna got in, we spent a few minutes just sitting there while I pointed out a few things that she'd need to keep in mind, then she put in the clutch, pulled the lever into gear, and we started off -- bucking around a little, while she went through the gears. There weren't any kids on the playing field and, anyway, there was a lot of dirt around it, so I had her slowly turn from the driveway and out onto the packed-down dirt so she could keep at it a little longer. I showed her how to bring the car to a complete stop, then I had her start up again. After a few times, she was doing really well. Deanna always seemed to have the self-confidence to "get the job done," and I was really proud of her. Of course, I took over when it was time to get out onto the highway and head for home, but her first "driving lesson" was a memorable event -- for both of us.

After that first time, we'd find places for practice drives just as often as we could, and she took to it like a duck takes to water. I remember another time when the three of us were in Sacramento visiting with our elderly cousins, Delta and Dorwin Clark. I took note of the fact that there was an alley that ran through their block -- right

behind their back yard. I went out there alone to do some "surveying." I set up a couple trash cans several feet apart, then went back into the house to get Deanna. Of course we were in our other car for that trip, but I had the same confidence in Deanna. When we were around the corner, and into the alley, I showed her the trash cans, then explained to her the technique to follow for parallel parking. Again, she did real well -- right from the beginning.

Deanna probably had a check-chart in her room somewhere -- counting off the days until her sixteenth birthday (January 20, 1962). She'd been studying the booklet put out by the Department of Motor Vehicles, and she could hardly wait until the day she could go to that office and get her first driver's license! Of course, Lenore had to drive her there, but she'd been promised that she could drive home -- if she passed the test. It was a breeze for her, both the written test and the "behind-the-wheel" part of it, but it was a real put-down when the lady at the counter asked her if one or the other of her parents was there. Of course Deanna said yes, but she was wondering why a parent was necessary at such a momentous time -- she hadn't remembered that the signature of one of her parents had to be on her first driver's license!

Finally the procedure was completed, and Deanna drove the car back home. I'm sure she and Lenore probably stopped somewhere for Cokes, or something, because it was sure CELEBRATION TIME! And I'm also quite certain that she took me for a ride -- just as soon as I got home from work that afternoon.

## Chapter 5A6

### Diversification for North American

Earlier I had mentioned that it was because of the Yaw Damper problem on the F-100 that I was transferred to NAA's Downey plant, and that developed into both an interesting and challenging project. However, as that work was winding down, I began to wonder "what's next?" Well, as it turned out, there was continuing work there for me, and I was glad -- since it was such an ideal location for commuting.

I became involved in the design of telemetering equipment that was associated with various missile programs. ("Telemetering" was the strange-sounding name given to the ground based equipment required to operate and control a missile -- both on the pad, and during flight.) I would like to make it clear that as a mechanical engineer I was responsible only for the mechanical design required on any job to which I was assigned.

The G-26 program, known as the Navaho Missile, was one of the larger of the many programs running concurrently throughout Engineering. At that time, the Military was unable to define exactly what they required, so the performance parameters were being created by Research Engineering in their test programs.

North American Aviation was recovering well following the slump throughout the industry after the conclusion of World War II. While still involved in many military aircraft programs, we were getting deeply involved in the new field of missiles, both "air breathing" and "rocket propelled" missiles.



Also, the company opened a new plant in Canoga Park for the development of rocket engines, and there was a nearby facility for engine testing, etc. It was recognized that post-war NAA was growing rapidly, but lacked definition. At that point, a corporate decision was made regarding the divisions of the company, and that decision resulted in each division being assigned a title, and each division's function being defined.

The original Inglewood plant, which by that time was being referred to as the L.A. Division, and was the company's aircraft division, would be known as North American Aircraft.

It was agreed that the plant in Downey would be divided into two separate divisions: one would be known as the MACE division, meaning, "Missile and Control Equipment"; the other division, which for the time being would continue to share facilities with the MACE division, would be the electronics division of the company, and would be known as Autonetics.

Then, there were to be two facilities in Canoga Park. One division would be responsible for the design and development of rocket engines, and would be known as Rocketdyne; the other would be Atomics International, or AI -- as we began to refer to it, and its function would be the testing and calibrating of Rocketdyne's engines.

This definition of the corporation structuring resulted in five divisions, and there was a combined total of over 100,000 employees.

In the early 1960s the Pentagon made a decision that affected many defense contractors throughout the nation. "Air breathing" missiles were to be discontinued in favor of the newly developing rocket fueled types. While this mandate was devastating to the missile division

(MACE), because it meant R & D (Research and Development) funding was pulled out from under the G-26 Navaho program, it was at the same time a boost for the newly-formed Rocketdyne division. Many people who had for months, some for years, been working on the Navaho program were suddenly without work. Fortunately, by then the company was large enough and busy enough that the majority of those people were absorbed into other programs.

"Corporate" was very interested in the new Apollo ("Man on the Moon") concept, and NASA was very anxious to get NAA involved. It was an extremely tight program since in those days of the cold war with Russia we were in head-to-head competition for space supremacy. They were trying -- and failing, and we were not going to fail, we hoped!

So, MACE division (a designation that was soon to be changed to the "Space Division") shifted gears from the Navaho program to proposals to NASA on the program that was to be known as the "Apollo" program. NAA's Space Division would eventually become the prime contractor on the Apollo program.

Meanwhile, as a direct result of the Navaho cancellation, we were left holding the bag, as it were, on a guidance system that had already proven itself in terms of extreme accuracy. Nothing like it was available to the Military, not even through the highly acclaimed Sperry Corporation who for many years had been tops in the field of gyros, and various types of inertial instruments.

This guidance system had been primarily designed for use with the Navaho, and we didn't want to lose it -- along with the missile! It was at that point that contact was made with various branches of the Military to see if the basic system could be modified for any other application.

The Navy responded immediately! They requested that a study be made as to the possibility of its use in a submarine. Preliminary funding was granted to cover a study program, and we were off and running. The potential for this was staggering, and eventually proved to be one of the company's largest and most productive programs.

As it turned out, I was privileged to spend several years on this program as a Project Staff Engineer, and that afforded me the opportunity to be in on the "ground floor" of the gigantic task of converting a guidance system which had been designed for a land-based missile into one for the Navy's use in submarines. This vast assignment meant that several of us who were directly involved had to make countless trips away from our home office, since it was mandatory to interact closely with responsible personnel from both the Government and various corporations. Being away from home was probably the least pleasurable aspect of this assignment, which at the time was highly classified and top secret, but it paid off for Autonetics!

The ultimate capability of the projected system would not only give continual positional information regarding the location of the submarine, but also, through its computerized system, keep each of the ten (or more) missiles on board the nuclear sub informed as to its location in relation to its pre-determined target. And, in case of an extreme emergency, this could all be accomplished within a very few minutes after a "go-ahead" would be received from Washington.

Since the N7 series of guidance systems proved to be so accurate, the Navy issued an "Overhaul Contract" which funded the installation of the system in all nuclear-powered submarines in the U.S. Fleet, and all of us who had been involved were very proud of that achievement.



## Chapter 36<sup>52</sup>

### "Faraway Places"

Instead of trying to tell "bits and pieces" about our various trips, in order to adhere to dates-and-ages sequencing, I've decided to lump together some highlights that spanned several years.

We always used one week of my vacation time for Family Camp at Forest Home, and sometimes we would go to Sacramento or San Francisco during another part of a summer, but we planned a "real" trip for 1957. We were going to leave right after Deanna's school was out for summer vacation, then still be able to go to Forest Home in August. Of course the plans got a little complicated -- that was the same summer that we'd "acquired" Scamper, and Deanna didn't want to leave the baby kitten!

### New Mexico and Colorado

Our first "faraway" destination was Colorado, by way of Carlsbad Caverns, in New Mexico. We went on the tour at Carlsbad Caverns -- a real experience, and we certainly enjoyed it!

Taos, New Mexico, was the next stop for us. We visited with missionaries whom we'd heard speak at our church. I remember that they had several children, and Deanna had so much fun with them that she didn't want to leave the next morning. We were privileged to eat our meals with their family -- around the big dining table in their large kitchen, stay in the guest house that was on the compound. That's the

first we had realized that missionaries do that as a part of their ministry, and it certainly caused us to continue to pray for them for a long, long time, and to help financially, as we could.

The missionary family took us to a program the night we were there, and we got to see native Indian dances -- a program that was geared to be of interest to tourists, but when the missionaries described their religious beliefs, practices and traditions to us, it was heartbreaking to hear. That time with them made a lasting impression on each of us.

From there we went on to Colorado so Deanna and I could see where Lenore had been born, in Las Animas -- in the house that her family owned on the northwest corner of Fifth and Locust Streets, I think it was; maybe it was Sixth and Locust. Lenore has told me that since Las Animas was the town that had the high school that was closest to their farm, her mother and her sisters and brother lived there during the weeks of each school year. Since they were a lot older than Lenore, that had been going on for a long time before she was even born. Alyce and Al attended that high school, and Mildred went to the elementary school in Las Animas. She has told me that each Friday night their dad would drive the eighteen miles to town in their Model T Ford touring car (she thinks it was around a 1919 vintage) to pick them up, so they could all be together at the farm northeast of Hasty for over the weekend, and attend the little Methodist church in Hasty on Sunday mornings. After the farm chores were finished on Sunday evenings, their dad would drive them back to the family's small home in Las Animas.

From Las Animas, we drove east those eighteen miles to Hasty, Colorado, where Deanna got to see the farm that her great-grandfather Cain had homesteaded, and where his family had lived, for many, many

years. Of course, by the time we were there it had been owned by other people for a long time, but the farmhouse and big barn were still there. (Since she wasn't quite six years old when her family moved to California, I thought it was amazing that she remembered how to get there!) Lenore had told me to drive about a mile north of Hasty, to the northeast corner of the intersection of a road that crossed the main road that went north from Hasty -- I doubt if they had names, they were just country roads. Lenore's parents' farmhouse and barn had been located about a mile east, on the south side of that same no-name road, but that land had been cleared years before, and feeding corrals for stock had replaced the buildings. Before leaving the area, we visited the cemetery just south of Hasty, and found the graves of the senior Cains, and others of Lenore's relatives.

From the flat farmlands of southeastern Colorado, we drove north to visit Agnes and George McClellan, and their daughter Barbara, cousins of Lenore's who lived in Elizabeth, Colorado. We hadn't met them before, but they were very gracious people. Even though it was a Sunday afternoon, they unlocked the General Store they owned -- so we could see a real one; before that, we'd only seen the one at Knott's Berry Farm!

Next, it was "Pikes Peak, or Bust," as the old saying goes! We even drove all the way to the summit -- in our brand new '57 Chevy! Then, it was on to Royal Gorge, and the cog railway ride there. At Durango, we had a ride on the real train -- the Durango to Silverton round trip on the narrow gauge railroad. We were there over the Fourth of July, and we got to see the fireworks show that was staged in the big arena that was probably usually the place where rodeos were held. It was all so much fun!



But, even though it was "fun" and "interesting," the long days of driving would often get tiresome for Deanna, our "ten-ager." (Lenore and I had begun calling her that -- when she'd had her tenth birthday the year before.) After hearing a lot of "Daddy, are we just about there?" and "How much farther for today?" we devised a game to play while we were driving along, and it helped fend off boredom. In fact, it became a favorite pastime for all of our trips. We'd start with the letter "A", then proceed all through the alphabet, trying to call out the names of cars that corresponded to each letter. Lenore and Deanna figured out a way to keep score, and there'd be "bonus" points if we'd happen to spot a car by that name, as we were driving along on the highway. (I credit that game of ours with causing Deanna to develop an unusual ability to recognize the various makes of cars -- at a very young age. She and I always had a lot of fun with our "car talk.")

But then suddenly, as we'd be driving through the wide open spaces, the game would often be interrupted with, "Look, Daddy! There's a horse! Please buy me a horse!" It's not hard to guess what my answer would be. Then we'd hear, "Well, why can't we have a horse?"

Lenore and I remembered that long drives can be tiring for kids, so we did the best we could to make the miles go more pleasantly.

### **A "Family" Adjustment**

After Scamper had outgrown being contained in a basket, planning our trips became a little more complicated. We could no longer leave him for our neighbor, Dot Dery, to take care of, as we'd done when he

was a "newborn"; instead, we'd had to find a cat "hotel" for him. No ordinary "boarding kennel for pets" would do since Scamper reacted violently to the constant barking of the dogs in an "integrated" kennel. (We had a nickname for him, too, like we had for our "ten-ager": we often referred to him as our "Pampered Scamper"!) We located a reasonable "cat hotel" over on Lakewood Boulevard, so our vacation planning wasn't hindered too drastically.

### **Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia**

I think Deanna was probably fifteen the summer that the three of us drove to British Columbia -- quite an adventure for us! We thoroughly enjoyed Stanley Park, in Vancouver, but the Capilano Suspension Bridge, a footbridge, was a little "iffy" for us! Then we went on the ferry -- car, and all -- to Victoria. That was a "first"! Butchart Gardens and the Empress Hotel were beautiful!

By the way, I have to tell about the very unique challenge that trip held for me -- when it was time to put our suitcases into the car each morning, after overnight motel stops. It was during the "bouffant skirt era" for women's fashions, and of course Deanna had to be right in style! By the time I'd get her heap of ruffled crinoline petticoats carefully layered into the trunk, I could hardly close the lid! There would be a cold silence going on in the back seat for the first several miles if "anything got squashed!"

### **Minnesota, Wisconsin, and a Special Treat!**

In 1962, when I was on the Board of Deacons at the Lakewood church, I was appointed to serve as the lay-delegate to the national convention which was to be held that summer in St. Paul, Minnesota, on the campus of Bethel College. Lenore and I were excited about the prospect of making that our summer vacation destination for that year, but it was going to take some real planning to get that act together!

Deanna had been very ill with mononucleosis that spring, and had to miss several weeks of the last semester of school -- her Junior year. If she was going to graduate with her class the following year, she was going to have to attend summer school to get caught up on her studies and, of course that had to comply with the school's schedule.

We carefully checked dates -- both the dates of the convention, and the dates for the summer school session. It wasn't going to work! But all of a sudden we hit on a great solution! I'd flown so much for business trips, but Lenore and Deanna had never been on a commercial flight. (Deanna had been in a small plane, when she was eight years old -- Nate Saint took the kids from Grace Church, one at a time, for rides in the little yellow Piper Cub that he piloted for the jungle trip that resulted in the five missionaries being murdered by the Auca Indians, in Ecuador, on Sunday, January 8, 1956.)

Lenore and I decided that trip to St. Paul would be an ideal time to treat Deanna and her to a flight on a passenger plane! And that's what we did!

On our way to St. Paul, we stopped for an overnight visit in



Loveland, Colorado, for a visit with friends who'd previously attended Grace Church. They were Tom and Ella Hardy, and their two sons, Brian and Lynn.

It was a tight schedule, but we hurried on to the church convention in St. Paul. Since the main sessions were held in a large auditorium on the Bethel College campus, most of those in attendance were housed in the dorm buildings. That was great! Deanna could just roam around with all of the kids, and take part in all of the activities that had been planned for them. Lenore and I attended the business sessions during the days, and the inspirational services each evening. It was indeed a "family affair," and held blessings for each of us.

After the convention, we traveled on to Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. Before we had left Bellflower, we'd done some "advance planning" with our friends from our "Dallas days" -- Chet and Myrna Harrison. Long before 1962, they'd moved back to "The Dells," as they'd always called it, with their (by then) three kids. We'd never dreamed we'd have an opportunity to visit with them! That was such a special time for all of us -- they took us sightseeing, we got to meet all of their relatives, and they even "housed" us at the lake cottage that was owned by Chet's parents. What a wonderful time we had!

From there, we hurried back to Denver. That was where I saw Lenore and Deanna off on a flight to Los Angeles, where they'd be met by Dwight, Marilyn, and little Valerie Jordan (that had been pre-arranged, too). I remember that they flew on a Sunday -- so they'd be back in Bellflower in time for the first day of summer school on Monday. That cut it pretty close, but it worked! What an adventure that was for them!

My drive back home alone was different, to say the least, but we'd planned some interesting things for me to do, too, since I had a little more time before going back to work. First of all, I finally had an opportunity to visit the Navigator ministry's headquarters at Glen Eyrie, just outside of Colorado Springs. From there, I drove to Window Rock, Arizona, to visit with some missionaries who were from the Lakewood First Baptist Church.

When the three of us were finally back together at home, we all had reports of great adventures to share with each other.

#### **In Summary**

All of our trips hold very nostalgic memories. By the time a young person graduates from high school, gears shift from "this is 'kid stuff' with parents" to "it's time for me to get on with more 'adult' things." Lenore and I remembered; we'd been through those stages, too.

## Chapter 57-63

### Deanna's First Car

Just because Deanna had had her driver's license since she was sixteen didn't mean that she was permitted to drive a car on an unlimited basis. We had asked her to not drive other people's cars, and she couldn't use the family car just "any old time." Like every other kid, she was anxious for the day that she'd have her own car.

Now, with her high school graduation approaching, Lenore and I had done some serious talking. I knew what she would like to have -- she'd made it very clear, just like she'd done about the bicycle a few years earlier. Oh, of course a new car was out of the question, but all of our "car talk" while we were driving here and there had given us some pretty good clues. So, I kept "looking."

One day I drove by a used car lot and saw a sharp-looking two-door 1956 Chevy. I looked it over real good, and drove it quite a bit, and was very satisfied with the car. The only thing I knew she wouldn't like was that it was two-tone black and white, but that could be changed. Deanna was going on a retreat with -- well, I don't remember if it was with a group from school, or from church, but I knew she was going to be gone, so I put a small deposit on it to hold it until Lenore and I could go back to the lot to look at it together, without Deanna knowing about it.

Just as soon as we could we looked at the car and decided to go ahead with the purchase, but told them we'd like to wait until Saturday to pick it up. When Saturday came, I drove it home and Lenore followed



in our car. We were both so excited that we could hardly wait until she'd be getting back from the retreat, later that afternoon.

I'd no more than driven it into the garage until here came Johnny Ensign from across the street. Since Ensigns' house was across the street east from our garage, he'd seen Lenore and me drive up with the two cars. As I've said before, he was a few years older than Deanna and already had his own little Model A coupe, but he was really happy about the surprise for Deanna. (I only mentioned Johnny this time; a year or so before, Don Bruegger would have been over to see the car, too, but by the time Deanna was a senior, he was already away from home -- for his first or second year at West Point Military Academy.)

I spent the rest of the day washing and waxing the car, and it really looked sharp. We made sure the garage door was closed well in advance of the time one of the other dads would be dropping off our "Happy Camper," complete with her sleeping bag and all of her stuff. After she'd gone into the house to put down her things, Lenore and I made up some reason for Deanna to go out to the garage (and of course we followed!). When she opened the side door from the patio, she was one surprised girl! And when we told her that it was hers, she was really excited! Even before she had time to say anything about the color, I told her that we planned to have it painted for her, and that she was to decide what color she wanted it to be.

She didn't hesitate, "Candy Apple Red!" No doubt about it!

How she loved that car, and how happy we were for her!

## Chapter 58.64

### Moving On!

We weren't very far into 1963 until it began to be apparent that there might be another change ahead for us. With Deanna's graduation from Brethern High School coming up in June, Lenore and I didn't want any distractions for her, so we didn't talk much about it, we just prayed about the possibility of moving again, and when it would be best for Deanna.

With the Navy's interest in the adaptation of the guidance system that had originally been designed for use with the Navaho missile as an inertial (no external positional readings required) system for submarine usage, it opened a virtually unlimited field of opportunity to the company.

This, along with the huge Apollo program running concurrently in the Downey Space Division, made it very apparent that the time had come to separate the two groups and obtain another facility for the rapidly growing Autonetics Division. By making that adjustment, the entire Downey plant would accommodate the Space Division, exclusively.

To temporarily "ease the squeeze" the company had already leased an existing facility down on Ball Road, in Anaheim, while new permanent buildings were nearing completion out in the area of La Palma Avenue and Miller Street, in the northeast part of Anaheim. I doubt if at that time even the people in Corporate could have envisioned that in just a few more years there would be a merger between North American and Rockwell International, and that the new Anaheim facility was destined to become the largest of the five divisions.

It was exciting to be a part of this expansion of the company, but it was also doing away with the convenience of my short commute up to Downey. I'd been spoiled! After a few months of driving back and forth from Bellflower to the new temporary location on Ball Road, I knew I didn't want to keep that up -- the facility out on La Palma Avenue would be even farther! But Lenore and I certainly didn't want to create any changes for Deanna in those last few months of her senior year at Brethren. So I kept driving.

When Autonetics finally got to move into the brand new buildings, it was great! The offices were so well laid out, and everything so well planned. The various labs were state-of-the-art, and there was even a Recreation building, complete with a swimming pool and exercise rooms, and conference rooms that could be reserved for special meetings. It seemed like going to work at a country club -- well, almost. It was still work! But I've already said how much I liked my work, and the challenges of the advancing projects.

Since Lenore always packed my lunch for me (I think I probably carried the same lunch box for all of my working years -- even during those early years in Dallas!), I began driving away from the plant during my lunch hour -- just to "explore" the new community. I'd wind up driving a little ways east to Richfield Road, then turn north and roam around. One day I turned onto Mariposa Avenue and found some huge pepper trees along that little road. It reminded me of the pepper trees along Valley Boulevard, over between Otterbein and La Puente, when I was a kid living on The Grove. It was so quiet there, really rural. It got to the point that in spite of the longer drive from home to get out to that new Autonetics facility for work each day, I looked forward to the



peace and quiet of the countryside during my lunch hours. I'd park in the shade under those pepper trees and listen to the "Thru the Bible" lessons given by Dr. J. Vernon McGee on the car radio, while I ate my lunch. Since it was taking a while to get a new lunchtime Bible study organized at the new plant, that was really a blessing.

I kept telling Lenore about the "country feeling" that there was out in that part of Orange County, and she was very interested. Her dad had taken her mother and her for drives over as far as Placentia, when she was just a girl, and was living on The Ranch in Brea Canyon. She was anxious to see it again.

One Sunday afternoon, after church at Lakewood, Deanna had gone somewhere with some kids, so Lenore and I drove out to Placentia to look around. It seemed like a sea of orange groves, but there were a few tracts of new houses being built, here and there. We found one tract up off of Kraemer Boulevard, near Bastanchury Road, and spent quite a while looking at the model homes. But then we had to hurry back to Bellflower -- so we could get to the evening service at Lakewood.

One day after Dr. McGee's study had finished at 12:30, I decided to take a little longer before going back to my office. I got back onto Richfield Road and drove farther north into the southwest part of Yorba Linda -- just to see what was on up there. I came to a street named Ridgecrest Drive -- it wasn't a crossroad, it just went east into a little neighborhood that was just being developed. There was building going on on the street, and it looked interesting. There was a cluster of new homes that were just being built, and the first four on the right were open as furnished models. I took a quick look at a couple of them, but I knew <sup>I</sup> should get on back to work. I kept thinking about them all

afternoon, and was anxious to tell Lenore about the houses when I'd get home from work later on.

The next Saturday afternoon we drove out to see those houses. The builder was there, and we really enjoyed talking with him. His name was Jack McLain, and he told us that that was his first venture at "tract" homes, he'd grown up building "custom" homes with his dad -- down in the east Tustin and Lemon Heights area of Orange County. We could really see the evidences of the quality of "custom builds," and we were favorably impressed.

The one floor plan that we really liked at the new tract was the fourth model from the corner of Rich~~A~~field Road. It had four bedrooms, and was 1,850 square feet. The price was \$25,500. That was a lot of money, but we felt pretty sure that we'd be able to get a good price for our Bellflower house, and that would help keep the monthly payments within our budget.

We talked with Jack McLain about that floor plan, and he told us that others like it wouldn't be completed for several months, and they'd be farther around on a back street. He pointed out that the one next door east was the same as the model we liked, but we didn't like the outside appearance as well. Jack McLain said, "No problem; since it's the same floor plan as the model you like, I'll have some of the men move the furniture into it -- we'll just use it as a model, and keep this one for you."

Deanna wasn't particularly interested, and we could understand. She didn't realize that everything would be different for her -- after high school graduation, with her friends scattering in different directions for college, or work. But when we told her that we'd

continue attending Lakewood First Baptist Church -- at least until she got acquainted with new friends at the college she planned to attend (Biola, in La Mirada) -- she began to warm up to the idea of another move. Then, when she went out to Yorba Linda with us to see the new house, and saw the room that would be hers, she began to not be dreading the change too much.

Sometime during the last few years in the Bellflower house, we had had another room added. As we'd considered the idea, we decided there was enough room in the back yard for the house to be extended. It became a new master bedroom, and made a really nice improvement ~~to the house~~. Now, we thought that would be a "plus" feature for selling the house. We were right. ~~Our Bellflower house~~ <sup>It</sup> sold almost overnight, much sooner than we were planning to move, since we were determined to stay there until after Deanna's graduation.

The sale of that house was quite a story, and I just have to tell about it. Lenore and I had decided to try "By Owner" again, like we'd done when we sold the Compton house, so we "planted" our sign in the front yard. I can't remember how soon it was, but it seemed like it was almost the next day when I got home from work that Lenore told me what seemed almost unbelievable. She said that a lady came to the front door that afternoon and introduced herself as a real estate salesperson, and went on to tell Lenore that she'd noticed our "For Sale" sign. Lenore politely thanked her for stopping by, then got all set to convince her that we were only interested in giving it a try "by owner."

The lady continued with something like, "I understand, but I'm really in a bind. I've been showing the house around the corner on Glandon Street, and the people who were interested phoned my office



earlier this afternoon -- all ready to come in to make the down payment and get the place into escrow. When I drove back out to the house this afternoon to talk with the owners, I noticed 'Sold' was across the 'For Sale' sign. I hurried back to the office, called the listing realtor, since it was on multiple listing, and was told that the sale had been finalized earlier this morning. Now I have to have a house for my clients. They want to be in this neighborhood and I'm sure they'll like your place. Oh, may I see it?"

Lenore said she didn't know whether or not to believe the woman, but she presented her card to Lenore, and mentioned knowing the Brueggers across the street from us, and Mr. Ligtenberg, a well-known Bellflower realtor who lived in the second house from the corner, on Glandon. So, it all seemed to be truthful. Not really believable, but truthful! Lenore told her that our "asking price" didn't include "extra" for a commission. The real estate lady said, "Oh, don't worry about that. Just tell me how much you are expecting to get, and I'll add enough more for my commission. I'll just have to have you and your husband sign a 'One Client Only' contract, and then I'll replace the sign in your yard with mine. If my client doesn't decide on your home, then I'll release you from the temporary contract, and replace your 'By Owner' sign."

After the real estate lady had looked through the house, she asked Lenore if we could meet with her that evening, after I was home from work, and Lenore told her that she was sure I'd be willing to do that. The signing didn't take long, then Lenore assured the realtor that she could be away from the house the next morning so she could show our home to her clients. When Lenore returned home that next morning, there was

a note from the realtor on our kitchen table -- she wanted to let us know that our home was SOLD! Lenore phoned me at my office to tell me the news, and we agreed that it must surely be the Lord's will for us.

Boy! did we get busy! Graduation was just a few weeks away, and the new buyer wanted to occupy as soon as possible. It was to be a cash deal, so no extended escrow period was needed. Lenore was sewing Deanna's graduation dress and packing -- all at the same time. But we made it!

When graduation night came, we were so proud of Deanna! She looked so pretty in her traditional graduation robe of the school's colors -- dark green with the gold-color stole, and the gold tassel on her dark green mortarboard hat. It was a bittersweet time for Deanna, and for all of the kids in that Class of '63. Friendships among those Brethren High School's graduating seniors were really strong. As her parents, we were truly thankful that since seventh grade she'd had the experience of being enrolled in a Christian school.

The three of us, including Scamper, moved into the Yorba Linda house that same weekend.

## PART TWELVE: THE FIRST FEW YORBA LINDA YEARS

1963 - 1966

### Chapter 39 55

#### Starting Again

It's hard to act happy when you're not, but Deanna did a good job of trying. The summer of 1963 was difficult for Deanna -- graduating from Brethren High and separating from those friends, topped off with immediately moving quite a ways east, from Bellflower to Yorba Linda, was traumatic for her. Because of the distance, various boyfriends couldn't "stop by" as they'd done before. She couldn't meet girlfriends from the Lakewood church for shopping at Lakewood Mall -- it was too far for Deanna to drive "on the spur of the moment."

The three of us continued going back to church in Lakewood on Sunday mornings, but then it was hard to say good-bye to those friends until a "next Sunday" rolled around. Deanna managed to find things to do -- after all, the three of us were "starting again" in our new home, and in our new surroundings. She helped me a lot, and I have happy memories of those months.

As I've already mentioned, the house we'd bought at 17672 Ridgecrest Drive, in Yorba Linda, was a "model home," but only the front yard looked nice from the street; the back yard had not been touched! I didn't mind that at all -- again I had a challenging "project" to tackle. The three of us scratched diagrams in the dirt, and I put pencil lines on paper. We had a good time planning just how we wanted



to landscape that back yard. It was a wide lot, but not very deep -- the lots for that entire tract of homes had been terraced on a hillside, so there was quite a drop-off behind our back fence. Since Ridgecrest Drive was the street that led into the development, there was open, undeveloped land behind us. (As it turned out, it was many years before another developer bought that open country, and built more homes behind us. We had rolling hills and huge eucalyptus trees back there for a long, long time. We loved it!)

After we agreed just how we wanted the lawn area to be contoured, and planned the areas reserved for shrubs, the "farmer in me" knew the soil had to be worked up before any grass seed could be planted! I went to the Yorba Linda equipment rental place and came back home with a small tractor and cultivator -- that really took me back to the days on The Grove, with some exceptions: mainly, less acreage!

I took the equipment home on a rented trailer, and that was just the beginning of our fun! We all took turns driving the tractor; well, that was the way it was supposed to work! When it was Deanna's turn, we had a hard time getting her off of it! Yes, it was real fun for us!

When the soil was well broken up with the cultivator, we went over it with rakes -- to rake out the rocks. That turned out to not be as much fun, but we kept at it until we were satisfied that most of the rocks were out -- at least the ones that were large enough to really matter.

Next, it was time to diagram the sprinkler system, and get it installed -- thank goodness, PVC was being commonly used by then, and it was far easier than all of the pipe cutting and threading that had had to be done for the yard in Bellflower! Finally, the back yard was ready

for seeding. (As I recall, "sodding" a yard in those years was just a luxury enjoyed by professional landscapers who were developing parks, golf courses, and other well-funded properties.)

By the time our back yard was well on its way, I'd decided that our front yard needed some additional "touches." Our new home was definitely a "ranch-style" home, so I decided it needed to be enhanced with a split-rail fence and climbing roses -- out along the street side of the front yard. I believe a word of explanation would help here: The lots along Ridgecrest Drive were terraced down the hill -- from east to west; that is, our property level was about 8 feet below the property on the east of us, and about an equal distance above the lot next door to the west, and that made for a sloping sidewalk along the front (north side) of our property.

In the triangular-shaped area between the sidewalk and the split-rail fence, we planted ivy. It soon became apparent that some measure had to be taken to prevent erosion of that sloping bank, so eventually I used decorated slumpstone blocks to build about a two-feet high "stair step" wall along the sidewalk. It was so much fun to plan it all, then see it begin to take shape. I'm going to include some pictures to give a better idea of how our home looked when those various projects were completed. That place in Yorba Linda was "home" to Lenore and me until we moved to Hemet at the end of August in 1984.

### **Some "Inside" Facts**

Another thing I mentioned earlier is that when we first looked at

the house, it was being shown as a "furnished model." It was our first time to have a "family room," and we had liked the way that room had originally been furnished. Since it was a combination dining room and family room, we went shopping for some "country style" furniture. I'm mentioning this just so I can tell that that was when we bought our round birch dining table, with the six matching chairs, and the birch china cupboard. Also, because Mr. McLain had shown the house with a "cuddle rocker" in the corner of that room, we kept shopping until we found a similar cuddle rocker. It was covered with a dark red fabric, and since then it's been at least three other colors! But we still have it! And we still have that birch dining furniture. (Our birch bedroom furniture had been purchased for the Bellflower house, several years before.)

Since it was a four-bedroom house, we were able to reserve one of the bedrooms for a "den," and that's where we had our TV (a larger screen than the little 10-incher that I'd assembled from a kit -- so many years before), a studio couch, the 3-unit bookcases and desk (we still have them), and a big, overstuffed, dark green platform rocker. Boy! that chair sure had a lot of years of use -- until it finally had to "go" -- in a garage sale! The other "spare bedroom" became Lenore's "work room," and that was where she had her sewing machine, ironing board, and typing things. She was so happy to have that room for her personal projects.

Deanna had enjoyed choosing the colors she wanted for her bedroom, and she and Lenore had a good time doing wallpapering and making curtains -- not only for her room, but for other rooms in the house.

Eventually we had a nice-looking home, inside and out, and the best part was in knowing that it had been a "corporate project."



### Church Visiting

Even though Deanna was lonely, she was a good sport about it all, and the three of us had good times together. We all knew Lakewood First Baptist would be difficult to leave, but we decided it would be a good idea to start visiting churches in the Yorba Linda area on Sunday evenings -- to see if we could find one where we could eventually transfer our memberships to. Yet, the three of us had such wonderful friends in the Lakewood church, the pastor's messages and the music were always so inspirational and challenging -- but, because of the distance Deanna couldn't take an active part in the youth activities. We went "back and forth" about it because . . . well, we were faced with a difficult decision, so we continued to pray for the Lord's guidance.

I just have to interject one of Deanna's objections for leaving Lakewood First Baptist Church. The new sanctuary was beautiful! Also, in recent years Dick Anthony, a well-known recording and radio artist who was also the lead singer and pianist for the Melody Four Quartet, had joined the Lakewood church staff as Minister of Music. His wife, Dottie, was an acclaimed harpist. In other words, weddings at Lakewood First Baptist had never been more beautiful!

One Sunday while we were eating dinner at a restaurant near the church, before starting the drive home to Yorba Linda, Deanna very solemnly said, "One reason I don't want to leave our church is because I've dreamed of getting married there." That was quite a declaration, considering that at the moment she had no immediate prospect of marriage -- at least, not that we knew about. But she was serious, and Lenore

and I remained serious, too. We tried to reassure her by saying, "Deanna, when you're ready to be married, Yorba Linda isn't so far away that you can't have your wedding in the Lakewood church. We've been members there for long enough that Pastor Carlson wouldn't consider us to be 'outsiders.'" She looked at us with a "Gee, do you really mean it?" expression on her face. That seemed to reassure her and, from that moment on, it was an understood agreement between us.

The three of us tried to keep reminding each other that everything would be different for Deanna when she started to Biola in the fall.

### **College — for Deanna!**

That first morning, it was with mixed emotions that Deanna left home in her Candy Apple Red Chevy for the drive to Biola College, in La Mirada, for the 1963 fall term. It was quite a contrast to when Lenore walked to school with her on her first day of kindergarten at Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School in Compton thirteen years before.

From times of visiting Calvary Church in Placentia and the Friends Church in Yorba Linda, she had met a few young people who'd be attending Biola, so that helped some. However, it was a difficult time for her. Lenore and I were glad that she had her own little car to drive, and we were thankful that she was a dependable driver. We just prayed that the Lord would help her emotionally; we wanted her to be happy, and to feel secure.

## Chapter 50-56

### Highlights from My Years at Autonetics

The new Autonetics facility on La Palma Avenue was wonderful. I don't think I'd ever been busier in my "working years," and the short distance from our new home in Yorba Linda was sure a big help. In fact, my office was so close to our home that I'd drive home for lunch once in a while. I'm not sure Lenore was real excited about that, but it was fun for me -- and it was certainly a novelty for us.

With the move of Autonetics division to Anaheim, early in 1963, I would never have guessed that I'd be in that location until my retirement. It was at the end of January in 1983, exactly 43 years after hiring in at the Inglewood plant, that I retired from what by then was Rockwell International Corporation. But that was still twenty years away, and I mustn't jump ahead in my story!

### A Noontime Bible Study for the Anaheim Plant

Since the Downey Bible Study group had had several Autonetics people in it, and even though they had been transferred to the new Anaheim plant, too, it still took us a while to get our new noontime Bible Study going. We had to wait for permission to use a conference room, but when it was finally granted, it had been worth waiting for! It was a room right there in our building, and that made it very convenient for everyone. That Bible Study at the Anaheim plant became a



real outreach for the Lord within the company, and it was good to be in on the "ground floor" within our new facility.

### **Company Business Trips**

My work was always interesting and challenging to me. I don't mean to imply that there weren't plenty of headaches connected to it, but those were part of the challenges! Not the least of the "challenges" were the trips that had to be taken for interaction with military personnel and coordination with people in other companies who were also involved in the same efforts.

My business trips had really begun in the late '50s and early '60s, before Autonetics had moved from the Downey plant. Even though the actual design of the Navaho missile was done at Downey, fabrication and testing was done at Cape Canaveral. NAA had a group of several technicians and engineers temporarily stationed at Cocoa Beach who had access to the test facilities at the Cape. As much as was possible, the coordinating was accomplished by telephone, but occasional trips were necessary. Sometimes it would be as many as three or four of us guys who would fly into Melbourne -- Florida, that is, not Australia. We'd stay at a hotel there, then have the use of a company station wagon for driving back and forth to Cape Canaveral.

But, as I mentioned earlier, the rapidly advancing technology of rocket-powered missiles, and their proven superiority, made obsolete the "air breathing" turbojet-type propulsion, and led to the eventual cancellation of the Navaho. Then, when that project was cancelled, and

Autonetics had successfully stimulated the Navy's interest in adapting its guidance system for use in Ballistic Missile submarines, our company business trips were re-routed -- from Cape Canaveral to Washington, D.C.

We got to where we'd refer to some of those jaunts as the dreaded "red eye" trips! Sometimes schedules demanded that we (I'd often travel with Jim Dinsmore, or other Project Engineers from the Anaheim plant) drive over to LAX to take a midnight flight to Washington, D.C. Problem: back in those days there was no commercial airport in the D.C. area, so we'd take a plane to Baltimore, non-stop. When we got in Baltimore about 8 or 9 a.m., their time, we'd get on a bus to Washington, D.C. Once we'd arrived at the bus station there, we'd go into the men's room to shave, etc., get a bite of breakfast, then take a taxi to the Navy's Munitions Building, on the corner of Nineteenth and Constitution Avenues, not far from the Capitol.

As soon as the intense, all-day conferences would conclude, we'd snap shut our brief cases, go hail a cab that would take us to the bus station, climb aboard for the trip back to the Baltimore airport, get on the plane to L.A. We'd hurry through a breakfast at the airport in L.A., then get back to the office in Anaheim -- about mid-morning.

Now, believe me, that was some schedule! Thank heavens not all trips to D.C. were that hectic. More often than not, we would stay overnight (rarely more than one night) at the "Executive House," a nice, but not elaborate, motel in D.C. As I recall, it was within walking distance of the Munitions Building, restaurants, etc., which made it very handy.

On several occasions I found myself close to where I'd been years before -- when I was working at North American's Dallas plant during

World War II: those times were when I met together with some of Consolidated's personnel at their General Dynamics plant in Fort Worth, Texas. In those days the commercial airport was Love Field, and landing or taking off from there always made me remember the days when Lenore and I would have driven out there to pick up Johnny Holmes, our good friend from "Otterbein days." I wrote about him several chapters ago -- he was ferrying planes during the War years, and would stop overnight with us once in a while, during the time we lived in Dallas.

As I've previously mentioned, Autonetics worked along with the Navy in developing the N7 SINS (Ships Inertial Navigational System) for use in their missile submarines, and that brought about an awkward situation with Sperry, the largest and best known manufacturer of guidance equipment in the world.

As prime contractor, Sperry, which was located at Great Neck, on Long Island, in New York State, was contractually obligated to provide a resident engineer to Autonetics. His name was Tom Driscoll, and it was his responsibility to oversee the program for the duration of the study and prototype contracts.

Tom was a real nice guy, a good engineer, and very likeable. We were on a couple trips together, and I enjoyed him very much.

Occasionally, I would have to make trips back to the Sperry plant at Great Neck. Primarily, those assignments dealt mainly with coordinating and determining hardware delivery schedules. Then, there was one occasion when I was taken through one of Sperry's "clean rooms," and I was particularly impressed with that! They had several of them, and they were just that -- clean! It took five or ten minutes to be prepared for entry -- getting suited, booted, and capped in clean clothing, before going into one of those labs.



Especially interesting were the times I went to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, at Kittery, Maine. (To get up there, we would fly into Boston, then get on a train for the rest of the way.) The purpose of those trips was for evaluating the modifications required to put an N7B guidance system aboard the submarine "Thresher" SSN593. Little did we know that in less than three months she would sink <sup>220 miles</sup> off the New England coast, with the loss of the entire crew. <sup>- 129 men</sup> The cause was never known.

APRIL 10,  
1963

There were several coordination meetings with the personnel of General Dynamic's Electric Boat division at Groton, Connecticut. That meant flying to La Guardia, in New York, then getting a taxi to take us to Grand Central Station where we'd get on a train that was outbound for Connecticut.

It was always hard to have to tell Lenore good-bye, but we were both thankful that the trips were never for longer than just a few days. If it ever worked out that I could find time to get to a store, I would try to buy some little souvenirs for her and Deanna. I happen to know that Lenore still has a necklace and earring set that I bought for her at Saks Fifth Avenue, in New York City! When we were kids, neither of us had ever dreamed of seeing New York City!

Another time that a business trip was of special interest to me was in the late '60s when I was able to arrange my return trip so I could have a weekend stop-over in Dayton, Ohio. In advance of that time, there were several letters of plans and schedules exchanged with Mildred and Arthur Goetz, and Arthur was at the Dayton airport to meet me. (In her adult life, Mildred had become severely afflicted with rheumatoid arthritis, and it was difficult for her to get around very well, so I didn't meet her until we reached their home.)

Mildred was the orphan girl who had lived with my parents from the time she was in her mid-teens, until she was married. She was a lot older than I, and Mother and Dad always referred to her as their "adopted daughter," even though there had not been any legal papers signed. I didn't remember Mildred, since I was only three when my parents moved from Dayton to Pasadena, but I had heard a lot about her from my mother. But I've already written a lot about her in the earlier pages of these memoirs; I've only mentioned it again now because it was such a "bonus benefit" to get to meet Mildred and Arthur during one of those countless business trips.

Of course I always wished Lenore could go along to see the various places that I had to go, but since that wasn't possible I was glad that she had gotten involved in the Yorba Linda-Placentia Christian Women's Club, and various church activities. She seemed to always find satisfying things to keep herself busy during the times we had to be separated. For myself, even though the business that would be taken care of on the trips was interesting and challenging, I always found it hard to be gone from home so much. Going home was the best part of every trip!

## Chapter 61 61

### Several New Developments

After a few months of visiting churches closer to our home in Yorba Linda, Lenore and I settled into the Evangelical Free Church of Orange, about five miles south of where we lived. Deanna occasionally attended there with us, and she also visited some other churches with new friends. For the time being, these were appropriate arrangements; as we kept praying, the Lord faithfully "directed our paths." We were very thankful that not one of us turned away from our trust in Him.

As more of the homes in our new tract were completed, and we were getting acquainted with the people who were moving in, Lenore and I began to sense a need for a neighborhood Bible study. Only the couple across the street, and east one house, went to church -- Herman and Elsie Dash were Lutherans, but we weren't able to enjoy real Christian fellowship with them. John and Doris Ehrle, and their kids, lived directly across from us. They were a great family, several years younger than we were, but very friendly, and their children were very well-mannered; we enjoyed them a lot. As Lenore visited with Doris, she learned that Doris had accepted the Lord a few years earlier, but John was bitterly opposed to her new-found faith, and she couldn't take the kids to church. Marj and Al Smith lived a couple houses west of us; they were friendly, but certainly not "church-goers." Then, later on Kathy and Terry Guindon, and their children, moved into a house down the street. Kathy was the daughter of Al and Marj Smith, and she and Terry became good friends of the Ehrles. And so it went, up and down the street -- just a typical neighborhood.



### **An Evening Bible Study in Our Home**

It was probably near the end of 1963, or very early in 1964, that I felt led to talk with Dr. Glenn O'Neal about Lenore's and my interest in starting a Bible study in our home. He was one of the finest Bible teachers we'd ever been privileged to hear. He was from the Long Beach area, taught at Biola, and Deanna had known his two daughters at Brethren High. We hardly dared hope that he'd be interested in such a small endeavor, but after praying about it he called me back in a few days. He said he would really enjoy being involved in a "small group" neighborhood outreach; he knew he wouldn't be able to continue for an extended period of time, but he'd be glad to help us get started.

Lenore typed up some nice-looking invitations, explaining that the Bible study would not only be a good time to get acquainted with God's Word, but would also help us get acquainted with each other in our new neighborhood. She went door-to-door, handed out the invitations, answered the questions the people asked, and especially assured them that we were not trying to get some cult started! The day of the week and the time were included. And we really began to pray.

Dr. O'Neal arrived on the specified evening; Deanna had known him well, so she was seated in the living room -- waiting. Lenore and I waited, too, wondering if anyone would show up. They did! The evening Bible Study at Honlines' became very important to many in our neighborhood. Some began inviting their friends from Anaheim, Buena Park, and other nearby towns, and lives were changed.

That evening Bible study continued for many years. When Dr. O'Neal

could no longer handle that commitment in his busy schedule, we were very fortunate in getting Mr. Wes Harty to take it over. We had first become acquainted with him when he was a teacher at Brethren High; his subjects were Bible, English, drama, speech, and music -- he was a very talented man, but his "first love" was teaching the Word. By the time we had approached him, he was no longer at Brethren High; instead, he was on the full-time staff at Forest Home Christian Conference Center. In spite of the distance, he still agreed to "drive down the hill" one evening each week to teach the Bible class in our home. Everyone truly appreciated his ministry to us.

We were indeed grateful to the Lord for His blessings!

HIS SPIND  
THE RIGHT  
GO BACK  
THE NEXT  
DAY.

#### Deanna's Change of Direction

It was a struggle for Deanna to continue attending Biola. Not academically, but emotionally. She would come home in the afternoon and seem depressed. During our family devotion time after dinner in the evening, we'd talk about her feelings. She was afraid that it would be a disappointment to us, her parents, if she didn't continue there. She said she knew she didn't feel like she wanted to be a missionary nor a school teacher, and that was what most of the other students seemed to have in mind. We assured her that we would be supportive of any decision she would make, but we wanted it to be her decision. She was just a week, or so, into the second semester of her first year when she came home one evening and told us that she'd checked out that day.

We felt so sorry for her, but we assured her that we wanted her to

just relax, and find other things to enjoy until she sensed some direction from the Lord. When Herman Dash, the man across the street, learned that she wasn't in school just then, he told her that he could really use her as a receptionist in the office where he worked -- a company in Brea. That was great. It was "something to do," and she liked earning some money doing it. That filled a very real need in her life -- for then.

By the time all of these changes were happening in her young life, Deanna was also attending the Orange Evangelical Free Church on a regular basis, and was getting well-acquainted with the young people there. One of the girls her age, Kathy Carlson, was a student in a medical assistant's school, in Montebello. Deanna became very interested, and one day she went along with Kathy to visit there. She came home with a lot of literature, and we all prayed together about that direction for her.

Almost immediately, she explained her decision to Mr. Dash, and he was very understanding. And that's just a sketchy background on how Deanna became a student at Southland College of Medical Assistants, in Montebello. Her Auntie Alyce liked that plan, too! Very often she would have Deanna stop in for lunch, or an afternoon snack, before driving back to Yorba Linda. It was a long commute for Deanna, but she loved driving, and she was at last happy with her chosen field of study.



## Chapter 62 546

### A New Acquaintance

One day when I was tied up with a phone call in my office at work, a man walked in, sat in the chair by my desk, and waited there until I was finished with the call. As soon as I hung up, the man smiled, then proceeded to introduce himself -- Mike Sivulka. I remembered having seen him at the Compton plant some time before, when I'd gone over there to check on the progress of some shop work that I was having done there. There'd been no reason to exchange names that day at Compton, so I really didn't know why he had looked me up.

He was a very distinguished-looking gentleman, and his smile was a very real part of him. I liked him right away.

My new acquaintance told me that he'd just been transferred from the Compton plant, and had inquired about where my office was located. He was not in Project Engineering, but was in one of the Engineering support departments. As we talked together that day, I soon found out that he knew and loved the Lord, and was very interested in knowing about the noontime Bible study. Then I found out that he had taught one at the Compton facility, and when he came to the Anaheim plant he inquired to find out if there was a Bible study there. Whomever it was that he'd asked had given him my name, so that answered my mental question as to why he was there.

We must have talked for at least half an hour. He told me that he and his family had recently bought a home in Placentia -- so he'd be closer to the Anaheim plant. (That story sounded familiar, since we'd

done the same thing.) He said they'd bought a home up close to Kraemer and Bastanchury Streets, on a street named Belford Drive. (That sounded familiar, too . . . those were the Placentia homes that Lenore and I had looked at.) I found out that he and his wife had three children, two sons and a daughter. The older two were married; just their youngest, a son, lived at home with them.

During our conversation, I told him that we had recently moved to Yorba Linda from Bellflower. Then, after hearing that they were having a hard time getting acquainted in their new location, and were missing their friends in South Gate, I told him that my wife and I were in the process of getting a home Bible study started, and they'd be welcome to attend. He seemed very interested, so I gave him my address and phone number.

After we'd talked more about the Bible study there at Autonetics, and after I'd told him just where we met, and the time, we exchanged extension numbers, and he left.

### **More About the Home Bible Study**

Since I've already told about the "beginnings," I'll just mention here that the Home Bible Study got off to a slow start, but we weren't discouraged by that. As people began getting acquainted with each other, and became more excited about studying the Word, several of them invited other people to attend. We tried to make it a pleasant time for everyone -- Dr. O'Neal was very personable, and made it so interesting; he conducted about an hour of study and discussion, then we had a time

for refreshments and getting acquainted. It didn't take long for the group to increase in numbers and interest, and we could sense that the Lord was doing a work that was "marvelous in our eyes."

Shortly after we'd gotten the home study time started, my new acquaintance, Mike Sivulka, phoned to tell me that he and his wife were going to be there the following Thursday evening. Sure enough -- Thursday evening came, and so did they. It was the first time either of us had met his wife, Helen, and it was also Lenore's first time to meet Mike. And, as I've already mentioned, Deanna always sat in on the study time, so she met the Sivulkas, too, when we were introducing them to the group of "regulars."

#### **About Some "Other Things"**

I'd no more than gotten into my office the next morning when my phone rang. It was Mike, my new acquaintance. He was all excited, and said he'd been anxious to call me to tell me what a beautiful daughter we had. He asked a lot of questions about her -- her age, was she in school, or was she working, and on and on. I wondered "why the sudden interest in Deanna?"

Then he went on to tell me that his youngest son, the one living at home, was not interested in things of the Lord. He said that when he and his wife had gotten home from the Bible study in our home the night before, Helen had told their son, Bob, that he was going to have to go with them to the Bible study next Thursday night because "those people's daughter is the most beautiful girl I've ever seen!"



Just another day or so later, Mike was in my office, again! That time he'd brought a picture of his son -- he said his wife wanted him to bring it to me so I could take it home for our daughter to see. Then he added, "We don't want it back -- it's for her to keep."

When I took the picture to her, Deanna's first comment was, "Wow! he looks like Ricky Nelson!"

She wasn't exactly without boyfriends, but, as I've already mentioned, for one reason or another -- mostly because of the distance created by the move, there didn't seem to be a "steady" at the moment.

Deanna began wondering if their son would really come with them, when it was Thursday night again.

## Chapter 63. 50

### Boy Meets Girl

I doubt if Deanna had ever been so anxious for the Bible Study night to roll around! Finally, Thursday night came. Deanna was seated in the living room, along with the other people, and the Bible Study started right on time. But where were the Sivulkas?

Finally, in walked Mike and Helen. They apologized for being a little late, and explained that they and their son had had to come in two cars. Just then, in walked their son --looking a little less than excited about the whole thing. One or the other of his parents went on to explain that he'd had to drive his own car because he would have to leave early -- he was taking a class at Fullerton College, and it was on that same night.

They took the empty chairs, and Bob sat closest to the door -- for a quick getaway, probably. Deanna was already seated across the room, so all they could do was sit and look at each other. He kept looking at his watch, and after just a little while he got up to leave. I remember that Deanna looked at me with a "What should I do?" expression on her face, and I motioned for her to get up and see him to the door. Then it was a sort of "Gee, thanks!" expression.

She and Bob went on outside, but after just a few minutes she came back in -- with a big smile on her face. It was evident that they'd had enough time to get acquainted -- a little bit, at least.

As it turned out, there'd been enough time for him to ask her for a date. Her mom and I weren't real thrilled about that, since his dad had

already told me about Bob's lack of interest in "religious" things, but we didn't say "no." (It probably wouldn't have done much good, anyway.)

Not more than a day or so after their first date, Mike was back on the phone again. He wanted to tell me that Bob was very frustrated because "that girl is sure choosy about the movies she's willing to go to with me." I explained to Mike that we as a family felt that many movies that were being shown could not possibly be pleasing to the Lord. I also told him that for quite some time after Lenore and I had become Christians, we cut out attending all movies.

As her mother and I talked further with Deanna about her dating her new-found friend, Bob Sivulka, we asked her to please respect our desire for her to not skip attending church -- at least each Sunday morning. (We remembered that sometimes it's hard to get back from Sunday afternoon picnics and drives in time for Sunday evening services.)

We were so thankful that Deanna respected our wishes. And, because of her insistence, Bob gradually became quite a "regular" at the Orange Evangelical Free Church. By that time, Deanna had made a lot of friends there, and Bob began "fitting in," too.

His Dad was phoning more and more often, or stopping by my office to chat a while. He and Helen were so happy that Bob was taking an interest in "church"; at that point, no one was sure if it was because of a genuine interest in going to church, or if it was the only way to be with Deanna for most of the day on Sundays! After a while, Bob and Deanna were in church most every Sunday evening, too, then would go out with some of the other young couples after church. Things in general were looking more encouraging!



### **Behold, a "New" Bob!**

Almost always, at the close of the each church service the pastor would extend an invitation for any who felt the need to come forward to talk with him, or one of the deacons. Then, on one of those Sunday nights Bob went forward! That was the night that the Lord really got ahold of Bob Sivulka! But, admittedly, we were skeptical. Was it real? Or was he wanting to impress Deanna -- and us? We prayed that it was genuine decision on his part. It was! It's Bob's testimony, but it was soon evident that he'd had a wonderful born-again experience, and we all rejoiced with him!

Then it was Deanna's turn to be frustrated! While she was happy that Bob had opened his heart to the Lord, she'd come home from being out with him and be real uptight! She'd say something like, "It's no fun to have to do the driving -- so he can read the Bible to me all the time!" Or, "After I'd fixed a nice picnic lunch for us, we spent most of the time sitting in the park with him reading his Bible to me!"

How thankful we all are that his conversion to Christ was genuine, and as time went on things did level out.

## Chapter 64 60

### Back to Life in the Real World

Deanna was finding that it was hard to keep things in balance. She was being kept very busy with her classes at Southland Medical Assistants College, and with the commute from Yorba Linda to Montebello, her days were filled pretty full. Bob was working long hours, too, so most of their time together was limited to weekends.

As I recall, Southland's course of study was planned for completion in one year, and about the last three months of that time would be divided between half-days in the classroom and an on-the-job assignment each afternoon. The college endeavored to place the students in medical offices that would be as close as possible to their residences, so we kept wondering where Deanna would be for her practical assignment. Also, another provision was that the school would place their students with doctors, or medical groups, who were needing additional employees, so if the trainee proved to be a capable office person, it was fairly certain that the temporary assignment would result in a full-time job -- after their finals and graduation from Southland College.

Finally the day arrived when the ones in Deanna's class would be given their student-training assignments, and we could hardly wait for our family dinner time, since that's when the three of us could be together for "reporting the events of our day with each other."

Deanna announced that she was being assigned to the Pediatric Clinic -- in Fullerton! We were so pleased! That would be just a few miles for her to drive on home, after her afternoon at the Clinic. Of

course, she'd go to Montebello for her morning class, then "report in" at the medical office for a full afternoon of practical experience. She was excited, and so were we!

### Another Car?

Things in general were going along pretty well -- until Deanna began talking about how her Candy Apple Red Chevy was beginning to seem "not very sophisticated," or some such comment of discontent. (Yeah, sure! I think she was probably eighteen-going-on-nineteen by then! Who wants a "kid's car" when they're getting "old"!)

We told her that we could understand her feelings -- up to a point! -- but we didn't know just what we could do about it. After all, she was still in school, and tuition still had to be paid every month.

But there came the evening when she announced that she'd seen a "really sharp-looking 1962 Chevy Corvair" -- on a used car sales lot, as she was driving through East Whittier, on her way from the school in Montebello to the medical office in Fullerton. We talked about it, and I told her that I was a little leary of a Corvair since it was Chevy's first attempt at a rear-engine car, and a radically changed engine design.

"But it's so sharp-looking! Do those other things really matter? It's sort of a toast color, and . . . well, I wish you could see it!"

Lenore and I looked at each other, and softened. We agreed that we'd go look at the car one evening after Deanna and I were both home from work. "But what if it's gone? What if someone else gets it before we go?"



We kept our promise. It was probably the next evening that the three of us drove up to the dealership to see the car. While Lenore and Deanna were busy looking at how pretty it was, how nice the upholstery was, how really "sharp-looking" it was, I was looking over the engine for any possible oil leaks. Then I took it for a test drive. It seemed very responsive, and steered very well. So then we talked some more.

It was agreed that we'd trade in her '56 Chevy, and Lenore and I would make up the balance due for the down payment. Deanna would soon be graduating from Southland, and since she'd already been assured of a job at the Pediatric Clinic, she would make the monthly payments on her "new" car.

So Deanna drove her little Monza home that evening, I was in the passenger seat, and Lenore followed in our '63 Chevy that was just about the same color. It was good to know that she was pleased with the color of the car, and that it wasn't going to have to be painted right away, like it had been with her '56 Chevy!

#### **Graduation Time — Again!**

We were so proud of Deanna at her Southland College graduation -- the young ladies were all dressed in their nurses' uniforms, and the ceremony climaxed with them each being "capped" at the time they were awarded their diplomas. It was a special evening for all of us! Deanna's Auntie Alyce attended, and so did her very attentive friend, Bob Sivulka. Alyce had even planned a little celebration party in Deanna's honor, so we all went to her home on North Findlay Avenue in Montebello, after the graduation ceremony.

Then, when Monday morning came, Lenore said good-bye to her two working family members! Deanna was so glad to actually be ready to earn her own money. She seemed to enjoy the atmosphere in the Pediatric Clinic -- she'd tell us that the doctors were all very nice to her, and the ladies she worked with were helpful and patient with her. But there were times when she'd come home from work all disgruntled! She'd burst into the house saying, "Kids! If I ever get married, I'm never going to have any kids! They take one look at you when their moms bring them into the office, and they start screaming! Then if the doctor says they have to be given a shot, the mothers start screaming at you, too! No way am I ever going to have any kids!"

### **Serious Business**

As I recall, it was after work on a Friday, in October of 1965, that Lenore and I were hurrying to get ready to go somewhere. I can't remember where we were going, but it seems that it was something special that we'd planned toward for a while. We were just about ready to leave the house when Deanna came into the family room, and she seemed quite upset that we were leaving. (She didn't usually care about such things, since she always had her own "thing" to do.) As we were going out the door she asked, "Well, what time are you going to be home?" (That was different -- usually we were asking her!) We told her that we didn't know for sure. "You're not going to be real late, are you?" "No, we'll probably be home around eight." "Okay, I'll count on that!" "Isn't Bob coming over?" "Not very early, he had to work long hours today, but he expects to get here around eight."

It was a dead giveaway! Never before had Deanna been so anxious for us to be around when Bob was coming!

We arrived back home around the stated time, and walked in to find one very nervous daughter. In just a few minutes, the doorbell rang. Deanna said, "Now, you guys stay right there, I'll go let him in." And in came one very nervous young man.

That was the evening that Bob told us that he was in love with our daughter, and wanted to marry her. But he wanted to ask for our permission before he took her to pick out the engagement ring. Somehow, Lenore and I weren't one bit surprised! And we were so pleased that Bob had "asked for her hand in marriage," instead of merely telling us their plans.

They told us that they'd like to be married in the First Baptist Church of Lakewood, if that would be all right with Pastor Carlson, and they'd like to have their wedding as close as possible to the anniversary of their first date which had been on March 17th, 1964.

Bob was back bright and early on Saturday morning -- for their very important day of shopping for Deanna's engagement ring. On Sunday, during the "Announcements" time of the morning church service, the pastor announced "the engagement of Bob Sivulka and Deanna Honline." It was such a special morning for them -- and for us, her parents. For our own little celebration after church, we took them to Knott's Berry Farm for dinner.

I mustn't forget to mention that Mike, Bob's dad, phoned me at my office -- bright and early on Monday morning! He wanted Lenore and me to know how very happy he and Helen were!



### Our Twenty-fifth Anniversary

Friends, families, well, everyone we knew, were all so excited about Deanna and Bob's engagement, and the wedding plans that were being made, the fact that on November 20, 1965, Lenore and I would be celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of our own wedding just about got lost in the shuffle! Somehow, that didn't matter to us because we were as excited as everyone else.

But that's not the way it turned out! Doris Ehrle, Elsie Dash, and Kathy Guindon helped Deanna pull off a wonderful party in our honor. Friends from the church came, neighbors came, even Pastor Frohman, the interim pastor at the Orange Church, was there. It was a wonderful time, and we appreciated everyone's thoughtfulness so very much. We especially enjoyed Deanna and Bob that afternoon -- they were so happy with their own anticipations, and they added a real sparkle to our celebration.

Twenty-five years! How good the Lord had been <sup>to us</sup> through those years!

## Chapter 65-6

### The Happy Bride- and Groom-to-Be

Finally the date was set. That took some hard planning since Deanna and Bob wanted their wedding to be on a Saturday, but they also wished it could be on March 17th, the anniversary of their first date -- St. Patrick's Day, in 1964. Since in 1966 the 17th would be on a Thursday, they decided on the 19th. When they checked with Pastor Harold Carlson, they found out that he would be back east for a conference then. However, he told Bob and Deanna that he would be glad to fly home early, if it would be too disappointing for them to wait until the next weekend. They assured him March 26, 1966, would be just fine, so that was the date that was given to the printer.

How many invitations should be ordered? Deanna, Bob, and both mothers began working on their separate guest lists. There was sewing to be done -- Lenore was in her glory! Deanna was afraid it would hurt her mother's feelings to find out that she'd dreamed of choosing her wedding gown at a bridal shop, instead of having it sewn at home. Lenore was overjoyed! She'd not had that thrill for her own wedding, so getting to go shopping with Deanna was like a Cinderella story for her.

Since Deanna was working, Lenore and she were kept busy on Saturdays! There was shopping to be done, trips to the bakery, trips to the florist, planning with the photographer, meetings with the wedding coordinator at First Baptist Church, in Lakewood, and on, and on!

Bob and Deanna spent long evenings working on their plans: whom to invite to be in their wedding party, what music they wanted, and on, and on!

Lenore made Deanna's "going away suit" for her -- just like Deanna had sketched it on art paper. Lenore made her own "mother-of-the-bride" dress. Like I've already said, it was really busy -- and exciting -- at our house! I was glad that all I had to do was get measured for my rented tuxedo (the first time ever!), and try to stay out of the way.

Then came the showers! It wasn't long until I had to bring one half of the ping-pong table into the living room -- so Deanna could cover it with a pretty cloth, then arrange the gifts on it for display.

Closer to March 26th, wedding gifts began arriving and I brought in the other half of the ping-pong table! The living room began looking like an over-stocked gift shop!

Bob and Deanna asked Dick Anthony to be their organist and soloist. They asked Dottie Anthony to play her harp. They asked Herman Hosier to do a vocal duet with Dick Anthony. (Herman and his wife, Elva, were our good friends from teen-age years; Herman had sung at Lenore's and my wedding -- a little over twenty-five years before; and during the sixties and seventies he was the tenor soloist with the well-known Haven of Rest quartet.)

Bob's brother-in-law, Don Shoff, would be the officiating pastor, and Rev. Harold Carlson would be the co-officiant.

Marsha Lohrenz would be Deanna's maid-of-honor, and other girlfriends would be bridesmaids. Dr. and Mrs. Dwight Jordans' eight-year-old daughter, Valerie, and Bob's niece, Christy Shoff (who was also around eight years old), were the two little girls who would assist the adult candlelighters, Doris Ehrle and Kathy Guindon. (Bob's other niece, Shelly, and Mickey's little sister-in-law, Pam Sprague, were too young to be in the wedding, but they were really excited about



the whole thing! Valerie Jordan's little brother, Timothy, was only a month old, so he would probably sleep through the whole thing.

Bob chose his brother, Mickey, to be his best man, and special friends of his were asked to be groomsmen.

A week, or so, before the wedding, Deanna entertained all of her bridal party at a luncheon in our home. Lenore and she had had such a good time planning for it, and everything was so nice.

Bob's mother, Helen, loved to entertain in their home, so instead of making reservations at a restaurant for the Rehearsal Dinner, she wanted to have it in their Placentia home. She enlisted the help of Bob's sister, Judy, Mickey's wife, Susie, and Susie's mother, Pat Sprague, to decorate the tables, and help with serving a wonderful dinner to at least thirty guests. It was such a festive occasion. Then, it was off to the church, in Lakewood, for the wedding rehearsal. We could hardly believe the wedding would be just the next evening!

## Our Daughter's Wedding Day

March 26, 1966! The big day had arrived! And it was a busy day for everyone. I didn't have to go somewhere to cut pepper tree branches for decorating the church, as I'd done on Lenore's and my wedding day a little more than twenty-five years before -- a florist was taking care of that! Lenore's sister, Alyce, wasn't going to have to bake a wedding cake, just to be sure we'd have one -- that order had been placed with a baker. We didn't have to ask Johnny Holmes to take a few pictures with his box camera -- a professional photographer was going to do that! But we did have to trade cars with John and Doris Ehrle for that evening -- Deanna's gown couldn't be taken in our car without getting all crumpled and wrinkled, so we needed Ehrles' station wagon to lay it out in for that drive to the church! It was an exciting evening for everyone!

After the ceremony, Lenore told me that Deanna was in a dither in the dressing room at the church -- she wondered if anyone would come to her wedding!

She hadn't needed to be concerned about that! When the wedding coordinator signaled that it was our turn, Deanna linked her arm through mine for our walk down the aisle. We both glanced across the sanctuary in disbelief! The lower floor of that large sanctuary was almost filled with wedding guests, and later we found out that there were several people in the balcony! As I escorted our daughter down the aisle, I noticed that our future son-in-law was waiting for his bride with mixed emotions -- a big smile on his face, and tears in his eyes. I felt just about the same way.

It was indeed a Christian ceremony; even now, when we meet old friends someone is sure to comment about how they remember what a Christ-honoring ceremony Bob and Deanna's wedding was. Deanna's mother and I were emotionally touched by their choice of theme Scripture for their wedding vows -- Proverbs 3:5 and 6 ("Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.") Then, as the bride and groom knelt for prayer on the satin-pillowed bench, Herman Hosier and Dick Anthony sang Bob and Deanna's chosen hymn -- "I'd Rather Have Jesus" ("I'd rather have Jesus . . . than to be the king of a vast domain, <sup>and</sup> ~~or~~ be held in sin's dread sway! I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.")

Immediately following the ceremony, the guests greeted the bride and groom at a reception in the church fellowship hall. But after that, Dr. and Mrs. Jordan hosted a private reception in their home on Rosser Street, in Bellflower. They had told us they wanted to do that for Bob and Deanna's families, and the members of the wedding party, since our home was several miles away, in Yorba Linda. Marilyn and Dwight had thought that would be a convenient place for Deanna and Bob to change into their "going away" clothes, and to say more personal good-byes to all of us. We certainly did appreciate that thoughtful gesture by the Jordans.

When the new Mr. and Mrs. Robert Joseph Sivulka were ready to leave for their honeymoon, we all followed them out the front door. Bob gallantly opened the passenger door for his bride, and she climbed into the car. Without anyone having noticed, and before Bob could get around to that side of the car, Terry Guindon had gotten in on the driver's



side! When Bob did see Terry, of course he "ordered him out!" Terry wouldn't budge! Finally, Bob got in, shoving Terry to the middle of the front seat, between himself and Deanna. (All of us who were watching this from the front walk were almost doubled up with laughter!) Bob drove away. Then he stopped the car (still within our sight) down at the corner of Rosser and Clark Streets, got out of the car, and made a big show of pulling Terry out -- all in fun, of course! At last -- the bride and groom were off for their honeymoon!

What a wonderful day! We had prayed that everything would go well, and our prayers had been abundantly answered. Now Lenore and I had a "son," and we were so thankful that our daughter had a Christian husband.

"Thank You, Lord!"

Forgotten you! - To my precious Lenore!

Forgotten you, Well if forgetting;  
Be thinking all of the day,  
How the long hours drag since you left me,  
Days seem years with you away -

This longing to see you, and hear you,  
To be held in your arms again,  
If this be forgetting; you're right my dear,  
And I have forgotten you then.

I don't remember all of this old song,  
But this that I do remember is so true,  
I do miss you more than words can tell!!

- Diana found it on the internet -  
interesting for what it's worth - not sure  
of factual content - January 2004

I'll be with you again some wonderful day  
I love you my precious Lenore! and I  
want you more than words can tell - yours  
Bob